The Middlebury Campus

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ZEITGEIST 2024

Introduction: The spirit of the times, dialogue

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Managing Editor

Ah, the best four years of our lives. Middlebury College is supposed to be more than just a place we go to school. We are a community of students living together — we go to parties together, play sports together and this year, we experienced a total eclipse together. In its sixth year, Zeitgeist seeks to find out the diverse experiences of Middlebury students.

Students might remember this year as commencing with a $10,000 incentive to not attend fall semester, going night skiing at the Snow Bowl for the first time or the college receiving huge financial investments from its donors. We prepare to say goodbye to the beloved — or despised — Battell Hall that has long defined the first year experience, as we watch the construction of a new first-year dorm, set to go up by spring 2025.

But for many, the past year will be remembered as one filled with tragedy. Catastrophic flooding destroyed infrastructure across Vermont and on campus. Our student body has suffered three student deaths in a short timespan, and Israel's continued escalation of its war in Gaza has had rippling effects on our campus.

Among all of this turmoil, one thing has remained constant: Students have called for and engaged in increased dialogue about difficult issues. And so, this year's theme aligns with the spirit of the times: dialogue. The Campus has received a series of op-eds from students and alumni calling for increased free speech on campus and beyond, especially in the wake of an ongoing lawsuit over the college's removal of Mead's name from the chapel. There was also dialogue about the location of the Feb graduation, with hundreds voicing their concerns about a lost tradition.

As the war in Gaza wages on, students and faculty have engaged in conflict-transformation dialogues, and on April 28, students set up an encampment in solidarity with Gaza, where they have led educational sessions and confronted the issue head-on.

During a particularly difficult time for mental health, students have not shied away from dialogue about the subject, and Center for Health and Wellness has used its $4.9 million gift to boost mental health, dedicating day-long events to support specific identity groups on campus and planning a possible adult playground.

This year's Zeitgeist is itself in dialogue with our old surveys, asking many of the same questions about breaking the honor code and drug use in the past years' themes of recalibrating-ing and being in transition.We

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"WE ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL": Students camp out on campus in solidarity with Gaza, demanding divestment

CHARLIE DEICHMAN-CASWELL / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The encampment has continued to grow in size since the 30 original tents from the first day, Sunday, April 28.

By MAGGIE REYNOLDS & KATIE FUTTERMAN
Editor in Chief & Managing Editor

At 7:15 a.m. on Sunday, April 28, a group of about 40 students set up tents on McCullough lawn to show solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. The students at the Gaza Solidarity Encampment — which continues to grow as more students bring their own tents — are prepared to remain on the lawn until their needs are met, or until graduation, which is a month away.

Encampments have appeared at over 50 colleges and universities across the country over the past few weeks, and more continue to pop up, but Middlebury's was the first protest of this scale in Vermont. Later on Sunday afternoon, Pro-Palestinian protesters pitched tents at the University of Vermont, as well.

After two full days in the encampment on Tuesday, April 30, Josh Glucksman '24.5, one of the spokespeople for the encampment, described the protesters as "officially in dialogue" with the college administration.

"We are in it for the long haul. We want the administration to respond to what we're asking of them. We're willing to stay here as long as necessary," Oliver Patrick '24, another spokesperson for the protest, told The Campus on Sunday afternoon.

On Tuesday, Glucksman estimated that there were 130 people who had been heavily involved with the camp. He added that the encampment had grown to include over 60 tents.

On Wednesday, May 1, hundreds of Middlebury students walked out of their 11:15 a.m. classes and gathered on McCullough lawn for chants, student speeches and a teach-in. Chants included "Middlebury you can't hide you're supporting genocide" and "not another nickel, not another dime, no more money for Israel's crimes." The walk out was a part of the National Students for Justice in Palestine's May Day movement.

Four members of the college's

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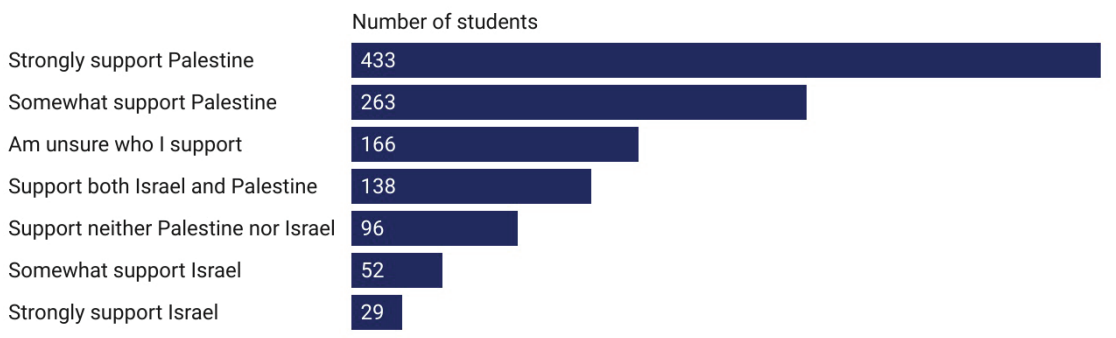
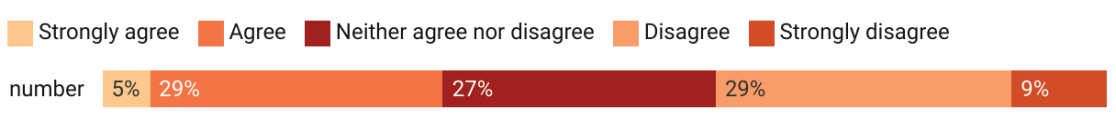
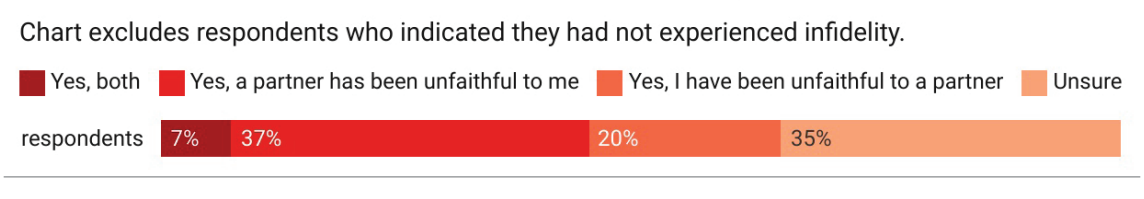
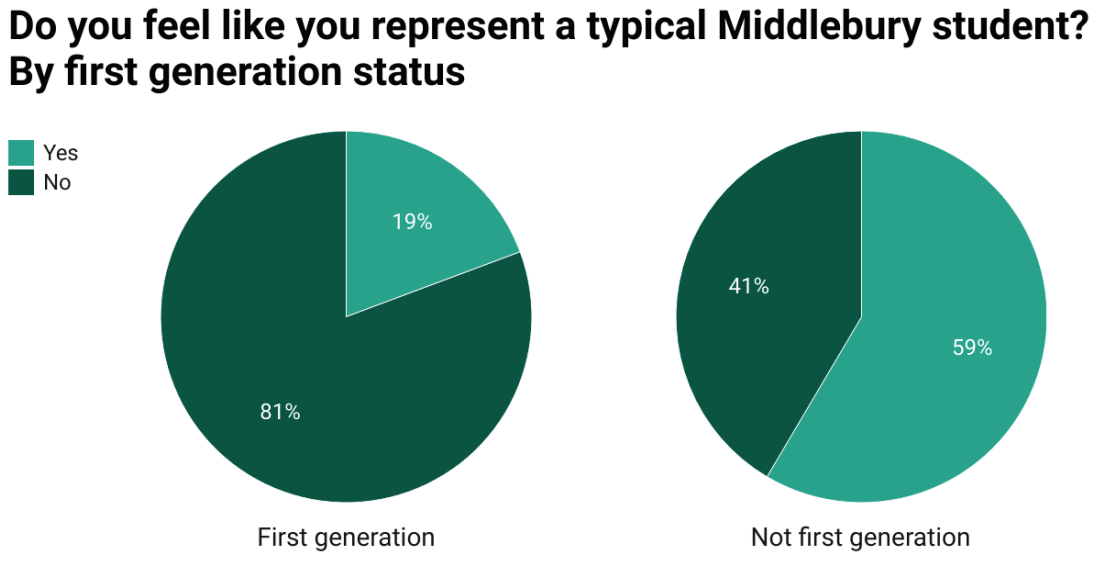

In the ongoing conflict in Gaza, I:
Number of students
Number of students
Strongly support Palestine 433
Somewhat support Palestine 263
Am unsure who I support 166
Support both Israel and Palestine 138
Support neither Palestine nor Israel 96
Somewhat support Israel 52
Strongly support Israel 29







Nine percent of respondents have experienced infidelity... have you?

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

While college students are notorious for planning out their lives to the second, love may be the one thing we cannot control — it could strike any of us at any moment during our four years here. The rumors of star-crossed lovers on the lawn seem to be just rumors, however: Only 17% of Middlebury graduates married other alumni from the period 1915 to 1991.

Numbers aside, Middlebury students love to throw around the possibility that they will find their future spouse here. In this year's Sex & Love section, we sought to find out the truth: How much love is really in the air on campus?

We learned that students' desire for monogamous relationships has increased, while satisfaction with the romantic scene at Middlebury has gone down. For the first time ever, we asked respondents if they have cheated on a partner or been cheated on.

This year, just 9% of respondents reported being extremely satisfied with the romantic scene at Middlebury and 19% said they are somewhat satisfied. There were fewer respondents happy with the romantic scene on campus compared to the 11% who said they were extremely satisfied and 21% who said they were somewhat satisfied last year.

On the flip side, 15% of respondents reported extreme dissatisfaction with Middlebury's romantic scene this year compared to just 12% of respondents last year.

Respondents who identified as cisgender female or cisgender male reported the highest levels of extreme satisfaction with the romantic scene at 20% and 22%, respectively. Cisgender male respondents reported the least extreme dissatisfaction at 13%.

Transgender men were the gender identity overall the least satisfied with Middlebury's romantic scene: None reported extreme satisfaction and 40% reported extreme dissatisfaction. Transgender women also reported a high level of dissatisfaction, with no respondents indicating being extremely or somewhat satisfied, and 28% feeling extremely dissatisfied.

A lower proportion of Middlebury students reported having had sex in the past year than did in previous years. This year, 77% of respondents said they have had at least one sexual partner, down six percentage points from last year. Still, the number of partners with whom respondents have had sex over the course of a year remained consistent over the last three years, with most having had one to four sexual partners.

The most common reason respondents gave for pursuing romantic and sexual encounters at Middlebury was companionship, at 72%, slightly lower than last year's 76% of respondents seeking companionship. After companionship, respondents described sex (52%), exploration (42%) and desire to find a future spouse (36%) as reasons for pursuing romantic and sexual encounters. The least common motivators were security (19%) and external pressure (13%).

The desire for a committed,

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Ilsley Public Library Expansion vote to take place on May 7

By JULIA PEPPER

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In opposition to SGA's solidarity statement and in support of student activists

By SHANE SILVERMAN

Students love their clubs — the college should, too

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

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Ducking tradition: Dolci spices up dishes from its

By ACADIA KLEPEIS. JACK TORPEY & CATHERINE GOODRICH

Art in the rain: don't Nocturne it 'til you try it

By VIRGINIA FRAU

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Women's track wins third straight NESCAC Championship

By JACK McGUIRE

Green initiative celebrates Earth Day, growing sustainability efforts

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Community, movement, education at the Gaza Solidarity Encampment

By JUNE SU & KANA DeCOSTE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

By RYAN McELROY & COLE CHAUDHARI
Managing Editor & News Editor

This year, 1,207 respondents completed The Campus' 60-question survey, answering a variety of questions across eight different sections. Middlebury has 2,546 degree-seeking undergraduates on campus this spring, meaning that 47% of the student body is represented in Zeitgeist results.

After receiving a 44% response rate last year, a slight increase of one percentage point compared to the 2021 and 2022 surveys, Zeitgeist 6.0 marks a four-year high in The Campus' representation of the student body.

In this section, there are differences between our demographic categories and the most recent college statistics; this may be attributed to over or undersampling of different groups, as well as different categorization of data in our survey. All demographic questions were required for respondents to answer, although one of those answers was an "I prefer not to answer" option.

The largest class years represented in our survey were 2024 and 2026, tied for first at 20% of respondents, while the class of 2025 was the smallest regular class, likely due to many juniors studying abroad this semester. There was a noticeable gap of 28 people between intended and matriculated class years for 2024, and a 36-person difference for the class of 2024.5. As noted last year — when the class of 2023 was 46 students short of those it matriculated with — the Covid-19 pandemic and related gap semesters or years may have contributed to the discrepancy in these categories.

Respondents were also asked to select which races they identified with and were able to select multiple options. White students made up 78% of respondents. Seventeen percent identified as Asian — six percentage points more than last year — followed by 10% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Black or African American and 2% Middle Eastern or North African. Less than 1% identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

According to the most recent demographic data from Middlebury, which only allows students to choose one identity, 55% of students are white, 12% are Hispanic/Latino, 7% are Asian, 6% are Black or African American, and less than 1% are American Indian or Alaska Native. There were no Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students recorded.

For the second year in a row, we found that while over one-third of respondents identified with a race other than white, significantly fewer said "yes" when asked if they identified as a person of color. Only one quarter of respondents identified as people of color.

Fifty-four percent of respondents identified as cisgender females, while forty percent indicated being cisgender males. Similar to last year, five percent identified as non-binary, while trangender male and transgender female represented less than one percent of respondents each.

Students also shared their sexuality, which was largely consistent with prior trends. Thirty seven percent self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning.

This year, 16% of respondents indicated identifying as or previously identifying as a student with a disability, a two percentage point increase from our 2023 survey.

As seen in past years, a plurality hailed from New England, representing almost 30% of respondents. Next came the Mideast, with 23% of respondents, and the Far West, with 15%. Eight percent traveled from the Southeast to Vermont, with an additional five percent from the Great Lakes and Rocky Mountain regions each, and three percent from the Southwest and Plains each as well.

Eight percent of respondents indicated that they were international students or lived outside of the U.S. In a newly added question this year, we asked that subgroup to share which country they considered to be home. Fourteen indicated that they were from China, followed by ten from Canada and seven from India. Other places with more than one representative included the U.S., Morocco, France, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Spain, Ukraine and the U.K.

In Zeitgeist 6.0, 543 respondents — 44% of the total survey-takers — indicated that they do not receive financial aid in any capacity to support their college education.

This year, 52% of respondents reported attending public schools, while 31% indicated attending private or parochial day schools, 9% reported attending boarding schools and 7% said they attended charter schools or magnet schools.

This year's result is a three percentage point increase from 2023, when 41% of the total respondents reported receiving need-based financial aid. The college has stated that 51% of the student body receives some form of need-based financial aid.

Eighty-five percent of respondents this year reported not being a first-generation college student and 15% of students indicated being a first-generation college student.

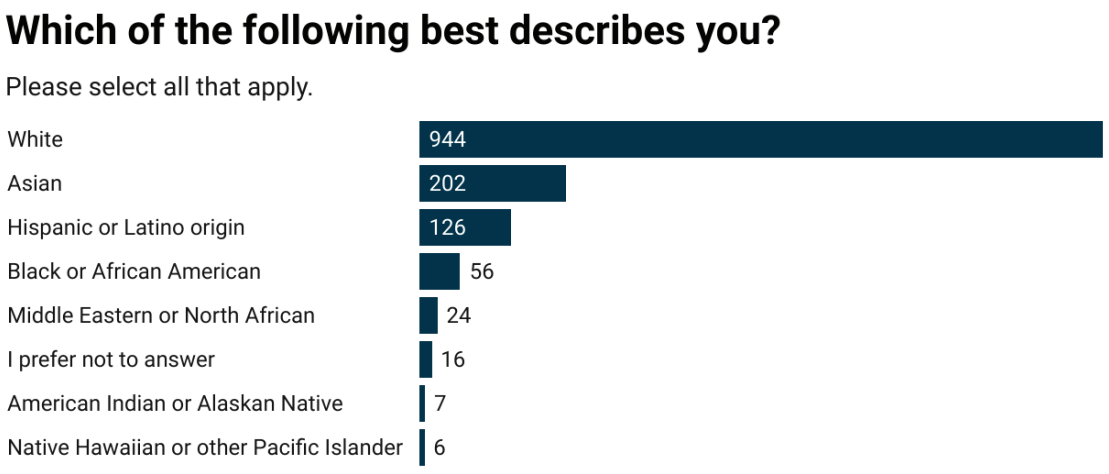
Of the students who identified as people of color, 60% reported not identifying as first-generation college students, and 40% reported themselves as first generation college students. This breakdown is markedly different among survey respondents who did not report identifying as people of color, 94% of whom reported not being first generation students and 6% reported being first-generation students.

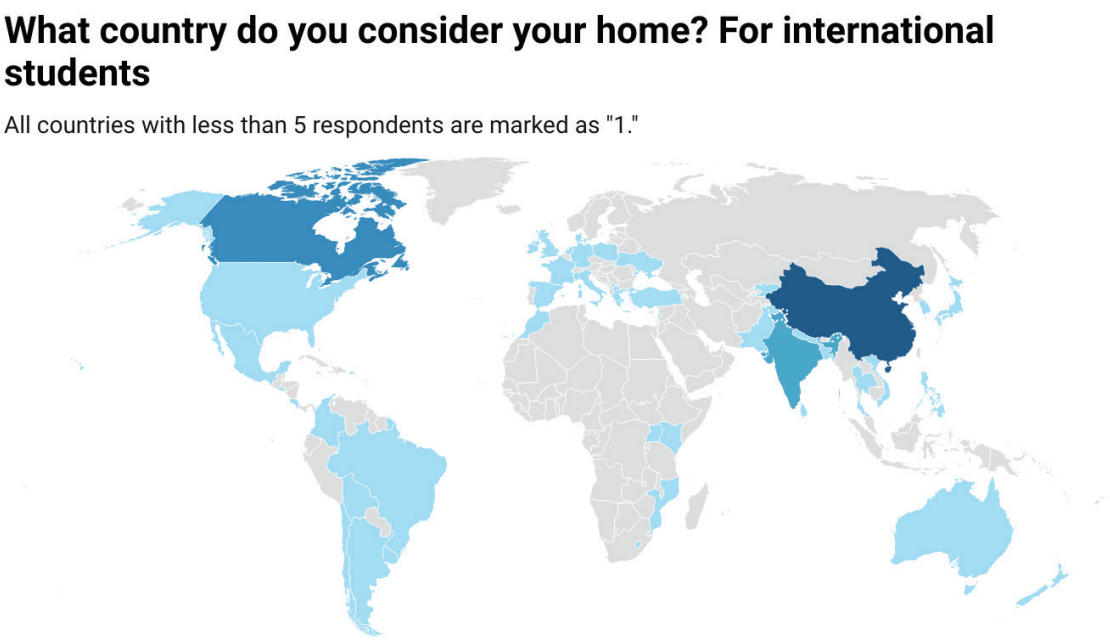
Ninety percent of respondents reported that neither of their parents attended Middlebury, while 10% said that at least one of their parents had attended Middlebury. These numbers are similar to last year's statistics, which found that 9% of respondents also had at least one parent that attended the college.

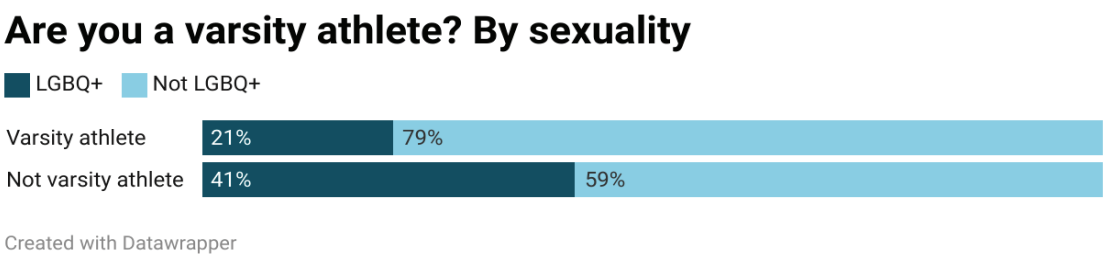
When asked about their involvement in athletics, 17% of respondents indicated that they were varsity athletes. The college has previously reported in 2020 that around 28% of the student body participated in varsity athletics.

Diving deeper into varsity athletics revealed significant differences between athletes and non-athletes. Only 21% of varsity athletes identified as LGBQ+, while 41% of non-athletes identified as such — a sizable gap of 20 percentage points. The results also showed for the second year in a row fewer respondents who identified as people of color were varsity athletes. Only 11% of varsity athletes identified as people of color.

Class year also appears related to athlete status — only 7% of the Feb classes indicated being varsity athletes, while 21% of regular class years said the same. The class of 2025 had the most varsity athletes with 52; the class of 2027.5 had the fewest with zero.


Which of the following best describes you?
Please select all that apply.
White 944
Asian 202
Hispanic or Latino origin 126
Black or African American 56
Middle Eastern or North African 24
I prefer not to answer 16
American Indian or Alaskan Native 7
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander 6


What country do you consider your home? For international students
All countries with less than 5 respondents are marked as "1."



SAFETY & WELLNESS

By KATIE FUTTERMAN
Managing Editor

Content Warning: This section mentions suicide, self-harm and sexual assault.

In the wake of three student deaths this year, one of which has been confirmed as apparent suicide, and all of which have contributed to increased calls for mental health support at Middlebury, this section has taken on new importance. We asked respondents for the first time if they had experienced self-harm or suicidal ideation while at Middlebury.

Nearly a quarter of respondents (22%) responded "yes." When considered by sexual orientation, 36% of respondents who identify as LGBQ+ had experienced self-harm or suicidal ideation, a result which is 22 percentage points higher than for those who did not identify as LGBQ+.

Results were also different between students who identify as a person of color as opposed to those who do not. Thirty-two percent of respondents who identify as a person of color responded "yes" to having experienced self-harm or suicidal ideation while at Middlebury compared to only 20% of those who do not identify as a person of color.

On average, students who took the survey rated their mental health highest this spring compared to any previous semester going back to fall 2020. Consistent with responses from the past two years, respondents rated fall 2020 — the first semester of school fully affected by Covid-19 — as their lowest mental health point. Notably, this past fall semester, amidst three student deaths and a war in Gaza with rippling effects on campus, students did not report a decline in mental health more than any other fall semester.

Discussions around mental health have often called for the college to hire more counselors, specifically for BIPOC counselors who are able to connect to students from marginalized identities. This year, half of Zeitgeist respondents answered that they did not feel as though their Middlebury (or Telehealth/TimelyCare) counselor was able to connect with them based on their identity.

These numbers were higher among those with marginalized identities: 66% of respondents who identified as a person of color said that their counselor could not connect with them based on identity, which was 24 percentage points higher than respondents who did not identify as a person of color. Fifty-three percent who identify as LGBQ+ felt that their Middlebury counselor was not able to connect with them based on their identity, seven percentage points higher than the 46% of respondents who do not identify as LGBQ+ and felt that their counselor could not connect with them based on identity.

This spring, after Center for Health and Wellness received a $4.9 million gift for mental health, the college hired two new contracted counselors: Adam Jon-Aparicio, who identifies as a first-generation college graduate and gay Latino man, and Alyssa Brown, who identifies as Black, queer and neurodivergent. The new counselors are only contracted, and do not work in-person on campus, but students can set up Zoom sessions with them.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents said that they have had a sexual experience at Middlebury that made them uncomfortable.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents identifying as cisgender men said they had a sexual experience that made them uncomfortable, while 43% of respondents identifying as cisgender females said they had a sexual experience that made them uncomfortable.

Fifty-two percent of respondents said that they avoid people on campus due to their own sexual experiences or the experiences of their friends. There was a 20 percentage point difference between respondents identifying as cisgender females, 61% of whom responded that they avoid people on campus due to their sexual experiences or those of their friends, as compared to 41% of those who identified as cisgender men.

About one-third (32%) of respondents said they use alcohol or drugs to cope with stress either "frequently" or "occasionally," down slightly from last year's 36%. Meanwhile, 40% of respondents reported never having used alcohol or drugs to cope with stress, which is four percentage points higher than last year, when 36% of respondents answered "never."

Of the 228 respondents who said they have experienced sexual assault, just over half of them (120) reported that it had occurred at Middlebury. Only 18% of those who reported being sexually assaulted at Middlebury said they reported the incidents to the college, and 63% of those respondents

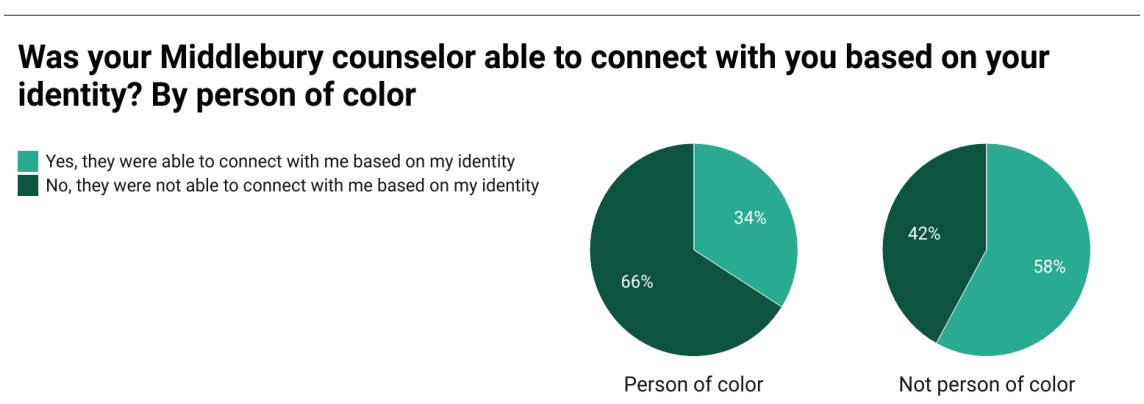
There was an 11 percentage point difference in victims of sexual assault based on their sexual orientation — 26% of LGBQ+ respondents reported having been sexually assaulted, compared to 15% of people who do not identify as LGBQ+.

The Campus asked whether people had struggled with their relationship to food or exercise during their time at Middlebury, and 64% answered that they had, compared to 68% last year and 71% in 2022.

The results by gender identity are similar to last year's, with 46% of cisgender men having struggled with their relationship to food or exercise, and 76% of cisgender females. Those who identified as trangender men, women and non-binary had similarly high rates to cisgender females. The highest rate was among people who said the gender options do not define them, with 91% of those respondents having reported struggling.

Fifty-two percent of respondents reported being comfortable using athletic facilities at Middlebury.

There was an even greater gap among genders than last year's 28 percentage point gap between cisgender male and female respondents, with 74% of cisgender males reporting they were comfortable using the athletics center facilities, compared to 40% of cisgender females. Transgender male and female respondents, as well as non-binary respondents, reported far lower levels of comfort using athletic facilities.


Was your Middlebury counselor able to connect with you based on your identity? By person of color
Yes, they were able to connect with me based on my identity
No, they were not able to connect with me based on my identity
34%
66%
Person of color
42%
58%
Not person of color

ACADEMICS & THE INSTITUTION

By JULIA PEPPER
Senior Local Editor

This year, economics was the most popular major, comprising 11.2% of respondents. Environmental studies (including all tracks) was a close second, representing 10.5% of students, a reversal from 2022 and 2023, when it was the most popular major, followed by this year's usurper, economics. Computer science and political science shared more than "science" in their names: These two majors were tied for the next most popular majors, as each contained 82 respondents, or 6.8%.

Next came Psychology (6.1%) Neuroscience (5.7%), and International Politics and Economics (5.1%). Of survey respondents, 12.3% had not yet declared a major, and 26% were double majors.

This year, 65% of respondents reported breaking the Honor Code, a record high in all six years of our survey. The percentage of students who have broken the Honor Code has almost doubled since Zeitgeist began in 2019, when 35% of respondents said they had violated it. In 2020, 46% of students reported breaking the Honor Code; there were 59% of students who did the same in 2021, 64% in 2022 and 63% in 2023.

As violations have increased, Zeitgeist 6.0 introduced a new question to gauge students' moral response to breaking the Honor Code, asking students to react to the statement "I feel guilty about breaking the Honor Code." Overall, more respondents (38%) disagreed or disagreed strongly with the idea that they felt guilty, while 34% agreed or agreed strongly that they felt guilt over violating the Honor Code.

Twenty seven percent of respondents said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement, indicating a sizable number of students who seem ambivalent about the Honor Code. This group may have to form an opinion sooner rather than later: The Honor Code Review Committee is conducting a review of this all-encompassing academic policy, a process that will be ongoing throughout the next year to address new challenges concerning proctoring exams and A.I. usage.

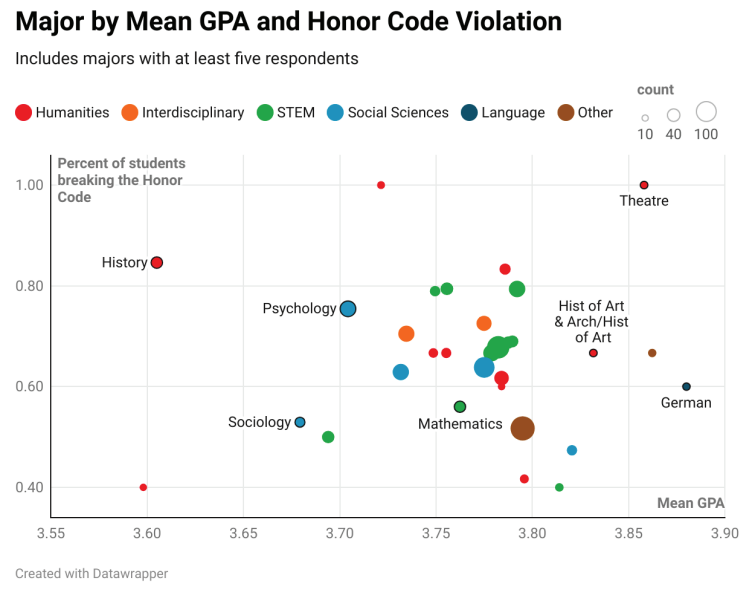
As in 2023, the most common method of breaking the Honor Code was using unauthorized aid (i.e. translators, calculators, SparkNotes, friend edits paper), which reached 44% both years. This year, 31% of respondents cheated on a test, 6% reused papers or assignments, 6% falsified data and 4% plagiarized.

Notably, the number of students who reported unauthorized use of A.I. nearly doubled from 2023 to 2024, jumping from 15% to 29% of respondents. This question was included for the first time in last year's Zeitgeist survey after the emergence of ChatGPT in 2022.

Sixty-nine percent of respondents who worked a paid job this academic year reported breaking the Honor Code, which is 12 percentage points higher than the 57% of respondents who have not worked a paid job and broke the Honor Code.

Mirroring last year's data, respondents in older class years were more likely to have broken the Honor Code. Seventy-three percent of the class of 2024 and 78% of the class of 2024.5 reported breaking the Honor Code. With less than a semester into their time at Middlebury, roughly a third of the class of 2027.5 reported breaking the Honor Code, while slightly more than half of the class of 2027 reported breaking it, marking a noticeable difference between respondents who had completed at least one semester here and those who had not.

For the second year in a row, we asked students, "What is your GPA?" Results showed that the average GPA was a 3.77 on a 4.0 scale — or above an A- — although The Campus recently reported the college calculated the average GPA to be 3.65 last spring. This Zeitgeist average did not include students in the class of 2027.5, because they have not yet received official grades for a full semester. There was minimal variation in average GPA among class years, although majors proved to be more variable.



Among majors with five or more student responses, the major with the lowest average GPA was comparative literature, with an average GPA of 3.60, followed close behind by history, with an average GPA of 3.61. The major with the highest average GPA was statistics, with an average GPA of 3.91 — the only major to achieve above a 3.9 average. Statistics only became a major in April 2023, possibly impacting the number of respondents who have had the opportunity to study that field.

Overall, 82% of respondents said that if they could make their choice again, they would still enroll at Middlebury. There was a significant difference when weighting for different demographics: 72% of respondents who identified as a person of color said they would choose Middlebury again, compared to 85% of students who were not people of color who said the same.

Among respondents who identified as first-generation college students, 28% said they would not choose Middlebury again. This was significantly higher than the percentage of respondents who did not identify as first-generation, 16% of whom said they would not choose Middlebury again.

SEX & LOVE

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monogamous relationship has continued to grow among students in recent years. This year, 76% of respondents said that they would ideally be in a monogamous relationship, compared to 72% last year and 70% in 2022. Though most would like to be in a monogamous relationship, only 50% of respondents said they have been in one during their time at Middlebury.

Far more respondents (44%) shared they have had a one-night stand than would ideally have one, which was at 10%. This trend extends to long-distance relationships, with 34% of respondents stating that they have been in a long-distance relationship since coming to Middlebury and only 9% indicating that this is their ideal type of relationship.

Similarly, 50% of respondents reported having been in a 'situationship,' while only 19% see this as an ideal relationship type. The rise of the term 'situationship' in media and public discourse has been notable in recent years, leading The Campus to change the title of this category from "slightly-monogamous 'thing'" to 'situationship' this year.

Across all class years, the most common ways Middlebury students have met romantic and sexual partners were at parties and gatherings and through mutual friends. These two avenues of meeting partners have steadily been the highest over the last three years. Only 17% of respondents reported meeting partners on dating apps, while nationally 53% of people under aged 30 use dating apps.

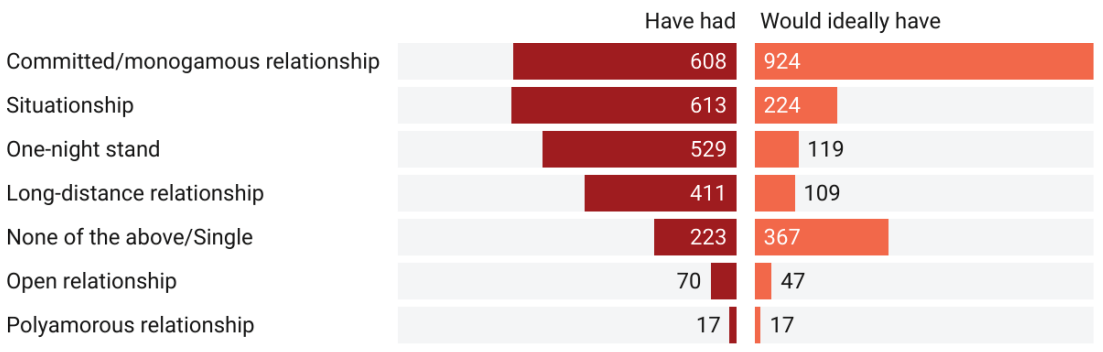
Twenty-one more students said they met romantic or sexual partners through the Middlebury Marriage Pact this year than last year, rising from 26 to 47 respondents. In 2022, 29 respondents reported the platform as their means of meeting romantic partners.

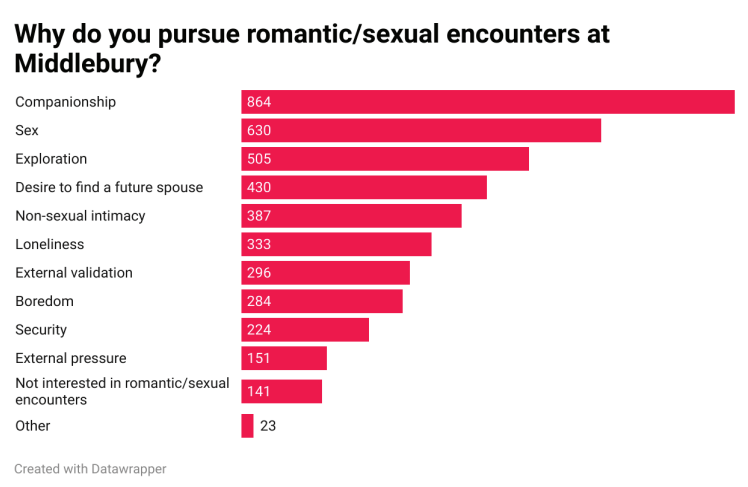
This year we added the option for students to indicate having met a partner while studying abroad, and 55 respondents reported having found a companion overseas. The class of 2024 has the most members who have met a lover internationally, while the classes of 2026.5 and 2027.5 have the fewest, with zero. Notably, nine members of the class of 2027 reported meeting a romantic or sexual partner through study abroad, perhaps as a result of the program that offered first years the option to spend their first semester in Copenhagen.

We asked students for the first time this year whether or not they have experienced infidelity in their relationships at college. Nine percent of respondents said "yes," they have experienced infidelity in some form here. Five percent of respondents said they had been cheated on while 3% said they cheated on a partner, and 1% said they had experienced both. Another 5% of respondents were unsure.

Within the 9% of respondents who reported having experienced infidelity, the majority (37%) said they had a partner who was unfaithful to them. Twenty percent said they were unfaithful to their partner, while 7% said they had experienced both cheating and being cheated on. A large proportion of this group, 35%, were unsure.

Seventeen percent of respondents described their sexuality differently now compared to when they first arrived at Middlebury. Last year, 21% said the way they describe their sexuality has changed, four percent higher than this year, and in 2022, 26% said the same — a drop of nine percentage points across three years.

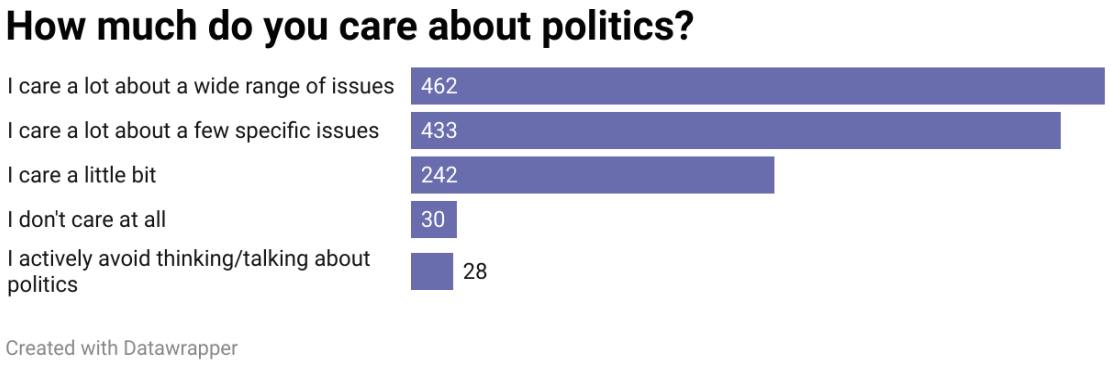

What types of relationships have you had and would you ideally have?
Have had
Would ideally have
Committed/monogamous relationship 608 924
Situationship 613 224
One-night stand 529 119
Long-distance relationship 411 109
None of the above/Single 223 367
Open relationship 70 47
Polyamorous relationship 17 17



Those who identify as LGBQ+ were more likely to indicate that they have changed the way they describe their sexuality since coming to Middlebury than those who do not identify as such. Thirty-eight percent of LGBQ+ respondents said they have changed the way they describe their sexuality while only 5% of non-LGBQ+ respondents said the same.

POLITICS & VALUES

By ELLIE TRINKLE
News Editor


How much do you care about politics?
I care a lot about a wide range of issues 462
I care a lot about a few specific issues 433
I care a little bit 242
I don't care at all 30
I actively avoid thinking/talking about politics 28
Created with Datawrapper

One thing is clear: Middlebury students care about politics. Seventy-five percent of respondents said "I care a lot about a wide range of issues" or "I care a lot about a few specific issues." Less than 3% said "I don't care at all," and only 2% said "I actively avoid thinking/talking about politics." This year's Zeitgeist produced similar results to last year's, where 78% of respondents reported caring about a wide range or few specific issues.

Notably, respondents who identify as LGBQ+ more frequently reported that they care about a wide range or a few specific issues than respondents who did not identify at LGBQ+. As threats like Florida's "Don't Say Gay Bill" continue to appear around the country, the lack of LGBQ+ representation in positions of power has become an even more pressing issue.

Middlebury also leans very liberal, according to respondents' self-assessments. The most common response rating was a two — with 30% of respondents — out of a zero to 10 scale in which 10 was the most conservative. Similar to 2023, the vast majority (79%) of respondents placed themselves somewhere in the zero to three range, while a typically moderate but left-leaning four seems to be a conservative answer at Middlebury. Only 10% of respondents described themselves as leaning conservative, an increase of three percentage points from last year.

Zeitgeist added a new question this year, asking students directly where they stand on the war in Gaza. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said they either strongly supported or somewhat supported Palestine and 7% said they either strongly or somewhat supported Israel. Eleven percent said they supported both, 8% supported neither and the remaining 14% said they were unsure.

Respondents who identified as a person of color more frequently indicated their support for Palestine compared to students who did not identify as people of color. Seventy-three percent of those who identified as a person of color strongly or somewhat supported Palestine; a smaller majority of respondents who were not a person of color (55%) said the same, a difference of eighteen percentage points.

Historically, Black activists like Malcolm X and Angela Davis have expressed their support for Palestine and fought to support the cause. In recent years, the Black Lives Matter movement has engaged in pro-Palestinian actions to show their solidarity.

What else do Middlebury students care about? For the fifth year in a row, climate change dominated the responses, with over 400 students identifying it as the most pressing issue of our day. Some respondents connected their answer of climate change to related issues, like current policies that perpetuate global warming and the abuse of natural resources as a direct result of late-stage capitalism.

Compared to last year, there was a significant drop in the number of responses — from 113 to 21 — that cited gun violence as the most pressing issue. Despite many mass shootings taking place in the past year, other issues seem to have occupied more prominence in the national conversation in recent months.

This year's Zeitgeist included 68 responses that named the war in Gaza as the most pressing issue. There were another 33 responses that more generally touched on issues like global conflict, nuclear warfare and the war in Ukraine.

Another new issue respondents cited was the 2024 presidential election and overall fear of the election outcome. Similar to last year, political polarization, division and global "democratic backsliding" were named as pressing issues. One respondent highlighted "our ability to communicate and cooperate within our democracy to work together as a nation to overcome the issues of our time such as climate change, economic disparity, food access, etc..." as their most pressing issue.

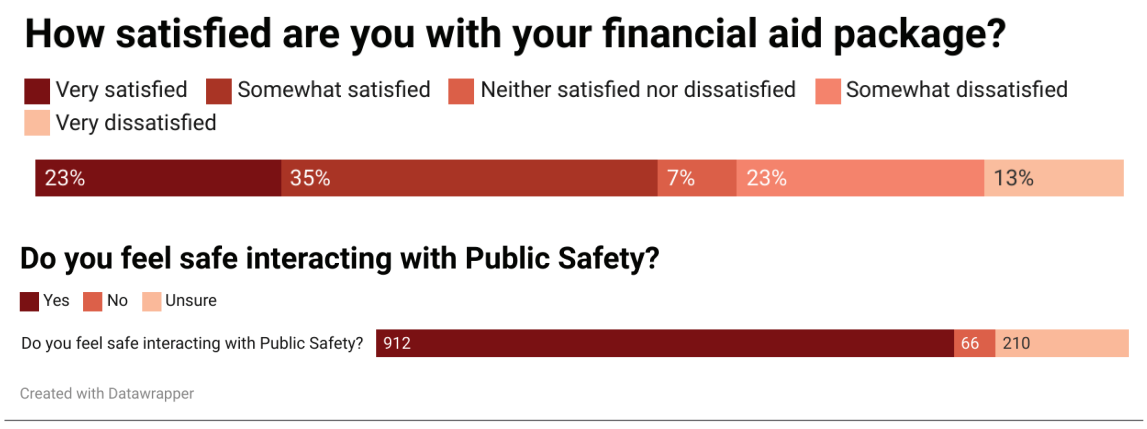
Other common responses included abortion and reproductive rights (35 responses), racial inequality (56 responses), mental health (12 responses), free speech (29 responses) and human rights. One response emphasized the issue of "rapid social change and globalization inflicted upon those without the abilities and experience to handle that." Another shared that same pessimistic outlook typical of Gen Z, worrying about the "incoming unavoidable apocalypse."

However, similar to last year, a lot of responses touched on personal concerns like a lack of empathy, academic pressures, apathy, body image and finding time for self-enjoyment. One person identified their most pressing issue as "the Middlebury housing lottery" while another cited "Jojo Siwa" as a top concern.

Other issues that appeared in responses included immigration, queer rights, wealth distribution, the threat of artificial intelligence, greed, education, the economy and extremism.

For evidence of Middlebury students' political engagement, just look outside, where students set up an encampment on McCullough Lawn to display solidarity for Gaza and to demand divestment from companies tied to the Israeli military, among other issues.

RESOURCES



By MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Editor in Chief

This year, we asked students about a number of resources on campus, including the Middlebury College Activities Board (MCAB), Midd Telehealth/TimelyCare and the Student Activities Office (SAO). We also inquired about students' satisfaction with their financial aid packages, and how safe they feel interacting with Public Safety.

Overall, students showed similar levels of satisfaction with resources on campus this year compared to last year.

Resources that received the most positive overall ratings were the Disability Resource Center (35% very satisfied); the Anderson Freeman Center (27% very satisfied); the Center for Teaching, Learning and Research (22% very satisfied); and the Scott Center for Spiritual and Religious Life (21% very satisfied). The Disability Resource Center, AFC and Scott Center also received the highest levels of satisfaction last year.

Resources that received the most negative overall ratings include the Student Activities Office (SAO) and Counseling Services, which both had 39% reporting somewhat or very dissatisfied. Midd Telehealth/TimelyCare also reported a high level of unhappiness, with 31% of respondents somewhat or very dissatisfied with their experiences there.

The SAO has implemented new programs such as the Join the Club fundraising initiative this academic year, which came $80,000 short of its fundraising goal in April, while club sports teams have continued to struggle with funding challenges. The college directed $4.9 million from an unrestricted gift to mental health services in December 2023 and recently hired two new contracted counselors.

Like last year, resources used by more students received worse ratings than resources used by fewer students.

Residential Life, MCAB, the Parton Center for Health and Wellness, and SAO were all used by over 70% of respondents. Resources used by the fewest students included the Prism Center for Queer and Trans Life — 75% of respondents reported not having used the Center — International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and MiddSafe.

The Prism Center opened in early April after having been in the planning stages since the spring of 2021, which is one possible explanation for the relatively smaller number of respondents to have used the resource at the time of the survey.

Respondents reported similar levels of satisfaction with their financial aid packages compared to last year. Fifty-eight percent of respondents who indicated being on need-based financial aid were somewhat or very satisfied with their financial aid packages this year. Just 13% of respondents stated they were very dissatisfied with their financial aid packages, on par with 14% last year.

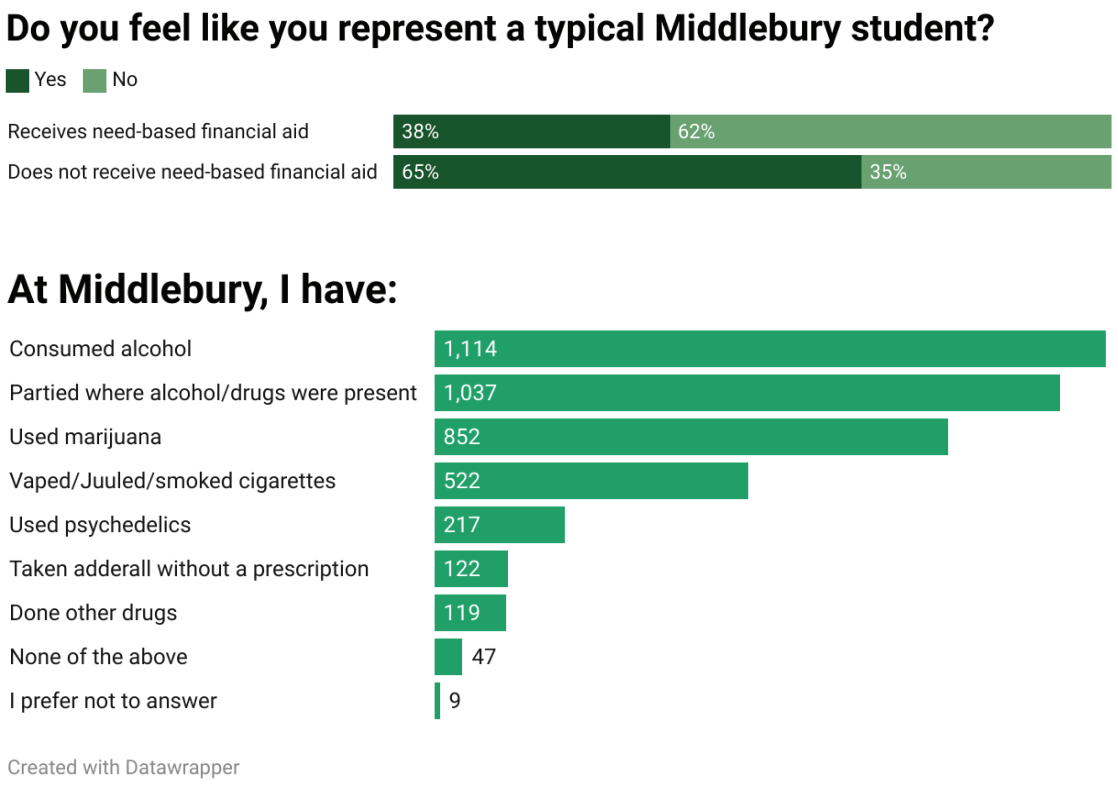
This satisfaction with financial aid packages did not carry over to their opinions of Student Financial Services. Fifty-three percent of respondents familiar with that department gave it a neutral or negative rating.

The percentage of students who reported feeling safe interacting with Public Safety increased substantially to 77% this year from 67% in 2023 and 61% in 2022. Eighteen percent of respondents stated they were unsure if they feel safe interacting with Public Safety and 6% responded they do not feel safe.

The difference in responses between students of color and non-students of color decreased from last year. Respondents who identified as a person of color reported feeling safe when interacting with Public Safety, eight percentage points lower than respondents who did not identify as a person of color. The difference was 18 percentage points last year.

Respondents who identified as cisgender females reported feeling safe around Public Safety by twelve percentage points fewer than those who indicated they were cisgender males. The same group was also 10% more likely to respond "unsure" to the same question.

SOCIAL LIFE



By CHARLIE KEOHANE
Editor at Large

Outside of the classroom, what shapes our quality of life and sense of belonging on campus? This year, we asked students about how outdoor recreation, substance use, student activities and employment shape their experience, as well as whether they identified with a "typical" Middlebury student.

Just over half of all respondents — 52% — responded yes to that question, marking themselves as typical Middlebury students. However, the results vary when accounting for demographic factors like race, sexuality and financial aid.

Twenty-four percent of respondents who identified as people of color reported that they feel like they represent a typical Middlebury student, compared to 62% of respondents who did not identify as people of color. Forty-five percent of LGBQ+ students felt they represented a typical student, while 57% of respondents who do not identify as LGBQ+ said they were a typical Middlebury student.

Seventy-one percent of respondents who identified as varsity athletes responded in the affirmative, while 49% of respondents who were not varsity athletes felt like they represented a typical student — over a twenty percentage point gap. Only 19% of respondents who identified as first-generation college students reported that they do feel like they represent a typical Middlebury student, 40 percentage points below respondents who did not identify first-generation respondents, 59% of whom felt like a typical Midd Kid.

Students on campus are rewriting the narrative surrounding the "typical Midd Kid." The Midd Kid 2.0 video, an updated version of the (in)famous 2010 Midd Kid video, premiered in December, featuring a new song and a more diverse cast.

Turbulence in the college admissions landscape is also affecting what background a "typical" Middlebury student comes from. This year, colleges around the country reckoned with the Supreme Court's decision to prohibit affirmative action, leaving an uncertain future surrounding the recruitment and support of underrepresented groups on campus. Despite changes in peer institutions, Middlebury is remaining test-optional for the foreseeable future, and will continue to consider factors like athletic recruiting and legacy status in its admissions process.

Alcohol and drug use remain prevalent within the Middlebury social scene. Over 1,000 students out of 1,207 total respondents reported that they had consumed alcohol at Middlebury and partied where alcohol/drugs were present.

Marijuana usage has remained consistent for the last three years and included 71% of respondents, although usage has increased from 66% in 2021.

Following marijuana usage, the next most common categories,"vaped/Juuled/smoked cigarettes," "used psychedelics" and "used Adderall without a prescription" were selected by 522, 217 and 122 students, respectively.

For the second year in a row, we asked how important student organizations (including social houses and club sports) are in students' lives.

On a scale from zero to five, with zero being not important and five being very important, the average response for student organizations was 3.16. Outdoor recreation trailed student organizations in terms of relative importance, with an average response of 3.08. Forty-four percent of respondents reported valuing student organizations at a four or five, while 39% rated outdoor recreation at similar levels.

In last year's survey, which previously asked students a simple yes-or-no question without allowing for degrees of importance, 74% of respondents said that outdoor recreation was important to them, while 68% of respondents affirmed that student organizations were important to their social life.

Unsurprisingly, over 1,000 respondents reported that academic work prevented them from spending time with their friends, followed by extracurricular commitments and jobs. Last year, students identified those same three concerns as the top factors from spending time with friends.

Behind those factors, mental health, a lack of a car on campus and financial cost of trips or outings were selected by 329, 310 and 289 respondents, respectively, as barriers to time with friends.

Forty-four percent of respondents who identified as a person of color indicated that a lack of a car on campus was a challenging factor to spending time with friends, compared to 19% of those who did not identify as a person of color. Additionally, 38% of respondents who identified as a person of color selected the financial cost of trips or outings as a barrier, while only 19% of respondents who did not identify as such did the same.

Varsity athletics also appear to be a hindrance to social activities — 73% of varsity athletes said that extracurricular activities prevented them from spending time with their friends, while 49% of respondents who were not varsity athletes indicated the same.

Like last year's results, 68% of total respondents reported working a paid job this academic year. Sixty percent of respondents who indicated they were varsity athletes worked a paid job compared to 70% of respondents who were not varsity athletes and reported working a paid job.

What do you want to see change at Middlebury?

By COLE CHAUDHARI
News Editor

In a year in which we have seen increased questions about the role of higher education and declining faith in academic institutions, we wanted to know what the people here think about their institution. To wrap up this year's Zeitgeist survey, we asked an open-ended question: What do you want to see change at Middlebury?

The 722 responses included support for mental health initiatives, calls for adding 35 pound weights to the Fitness Center and complaints about student organization funding from the Student Activities Office (SAO).

The largest of any one topic area — making up 16% of responses — addressed a lack of community at Middlebury, and the outsized impact of "cliques" upon the college's social environment.

Of those responses, many students wrote about feeling excluded from social spaces because of wealth or racial gaps. Other students mentioned making Middlebury more unique and de-emphasizing the career-advancement aspects of socializing.

"I want to see more people being themselves. Make middlebury weird!!" one student wrote.

"I wish that there were more spaces for community gathering that didn't feel like they were trying to accomplish things like 'networking'," wrote another respondent.

Sixty-two respondents sought improvements in Middlebury's inclusivity, especially for students of color, LGBTQ+ students and disabled students. Several respondents discussed issues of visibility and exclusion among those groups.

"I want to meet more queer people without feeling the need to perform my queerness to fit in with a group," one student wrote.

A number of respondents commented on an observed tendency towards self-segregation among Middlebury students when selecting social groups.

Sixty responses clustered around the topic of mental health and mental health support at the college, with 11 respondents explicitly addressing student death.

"I want to know that Middlebury is doing its best to keep my friends safe," one student shared, reflecting on a challenging year that has seen three students pass away on or off-campus.

A number of those sixty responses discussed reforming the academic policies in place to accommodate students struggling with mental health issues.

"I want mental health services to be vastly expanded so that all students can access free, continued mental health care when they want or need it," another respondent wrote.

Seven percent of respondents discussed the academics at Middlebury, often calling for a lessening of the academic pressure upon students.

"Less work, literally drowning," one student wrote. Other students suggested reformatting grading policies.

"I want to see anonymous grading where professors don't see your name when grading. A professor did this in one of my classes and I think it makes sense for the entire institution," one student wrote.

One student called for an expansion of academic intensity: "Increased academic rigor. I feel like most of my real learning was concentrated in a small number of fantastic classes led by great professors."

Forty-nine student responses concerned free speech and campus politics, two very contentious topics in recent memory at Middlebury. Many of those responses lamented political polarization and ideological conformity on campus.

"I want to actually hear people's opinions instead of hearing everyone resorting to groupthink. DO the critical thinking you accuse your opponents of being incapable of, " one student wrote.

A few student responses displayed a hope that Middlebury students would get more involved with local political organizations, and that the student body would boost its civic participation in the town of Middlebury and in Vermont more broadly.

These responses highlighted groups like Migrant Justice's "Milk with Dignity" campaign — a migrant justice program based in Burlington, Vt. — as an example of political collectives to which Middlebury students could contribute more.

The longest response by over 200 words came from a first year student, who wrote 459 words on the "inane or thoughtless administration" that reinforces "individuality and aggrandizement" to our detriment.

"Every single one of us could benefit from having our values and egos challenged," the prolific student wrote. "Comfort is not the goal of an enriched education."

Not everyone was so confident in their responses, however. Thirty students responded with some variation of "I don't know" or "Unsure" and are perhaps still pondering the weighty question that prompted such ambivalence.

A handful of students took the open-ended opportunity to inject a bit of levity into the survey's data.

Other responses that refused to be easily categorized included "I want to change the fact that I am single,"; "Enroll more baddies,"; "More fish"; and — perhaps, most importantly — "More zeitgeists."

"WE ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL":

Students camp out on campus in solidarity with Gaza, demanding divestment

Continued from Page 1

Senior Leadership Group — Vice President for Student Affairs Smita Ruzicka, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration David Provost, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion Khuram Hussain and Dean of Faculty Jim Ralph — met with four students representing the encampment on Tuesday morning.

"We had an initial meeting with student organizers on Tuesday, April 30, during which we discussed their concerns, general safety, and exploring avenues for continued engagement," a spokesperson for the college wrote in an email to The Campus on Tuesday afternoon. "We did not reach a resolution at that time but plan to continue the discussions in the coming days."

The college spokesperson added that the college's top priorities are the safety and security of all students on campus and encouraging the educational institution's values of freedom of expression. "Right now, the group's behavior is not substantially disruptive, and our focus is on dialogue and carrying out our educational mission," they wrote.

"We do know that as we get closer to graduation, the rules will change about what we're doing here on this grass, where grad is going to happen. We know that administrators are going to pull up any rule in the book to try and get us to leave," Glucksman said on Monday.

Planning for the event was largely kept under wraps among a group of organizers, and many people were surprised by the tents from the Gear Room on Sunday morning. Patrick and Glucksman emphasized that the encampment is open to anyone who wants to get involved.

The protesters have created three "zones" of involvement in the encampment. Red zone students have committed to live at the encampment and are willing to risk academic sanction and arrest; yellow zone students will stay unless asked to disperse by law enforcement; green zone students will participate in daytime activities at the encampment.

Athena Antippas '26, another organizer of the protest, described the zones as a way of helping people understand the risks of participating in the encampment, and protecting the most vulnerable groups, such as international students and students of color.

"We came up with this in a defensive manner, because we know that the rules are going to change, that they're going to find loopholes, or they're going to be scouring the handbook," Antippas told The Campus on Monday. "And we wanted to make sure that there's an internal understanding of how we keep each other safe"

The demands of the encampment, according to the organizers, are divestment of Middlebury's endowment from holdings in companies that profit from Israel's military campaign; freedom of speech and protester amnesty; an end to association with Israeli institutions and businesses; and cultivating association with Palestinian academic and cultural institutions without a requirement that the college partner with Israeli counterparts as well.

The organizers also demand the college end its silence "by releasing a public statement calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and condemning Israel's genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people," according to the press statement on the Middlebury Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) Instagram released Sunday morning.

The encampment is not affiliated directly with Middlebury SJP. The SJP organization has been in conversation with the college administration about its investment in Israeli-affiliated companies for the past six months, Glucksman told The Campus.

"A number of us were frustrated with basically the extent to which the administration was willing to engage with us beyond a lot of conflict transformation kind of stuff. We weren't really making tangible achievements or intangible progress on some of our main goals," Patrick said.

Glucksman and Patrick called for increased transparency about where the school is investing its money. Middlebury's investment is contracted through a private firm called Investure, which means many of the investments are not available to the public. Glucksman said although the college does not have public holdings in arms manufacturing, there is no way to know the private holdings. He added that Middlebury has no explicit policy to not have holdings in arms manufacturing.

In 2019, the Board of Trustees voted to divest from fossil fuels in response to the student-led Energy 2028 campaign. In 1986, the college divested from business in South Africa in response to student and faculty calls amidst apartheid.

Since Sunday, the encampment has held daily educational programming, such as workshops on "Zionist Co-opting of Judaism" and "Palestine and the Environment," and twice daily general assembly meetings. The protesters set up a so-called "People's University" tent in the encampment, where professors have held classes and clubs can hold meetings.

College faculty and staff members have supported students through offering supplies such as tarps in case of rain. Community members from Vermont Justice for Palestine have also visited the encampment. Wafic Faour, a member of Vermont Justice for Palestine, came to the encampment from Richmond, Vt. and gave a speech on Sunday afternoon.

"You will learn from this encampment more than you will in your classes. Believe me," Faour told the crowd. "You are not studying history, you are creating history."

He told the protestors that there is a place for Jewish students at the encampment.

"Liberating ourselves from historical genocide is to stand with the people who are suffering. Is to liberate our Jewish communities of the Zionist occupation to their identities," Faour explained.

Glucksman stated that he has been disappointed by mainstream media coverage focused on moments of anti-semitism at encampments across other college campuses, and that this protest at Middlebury would feature Jewish students celebrating Passover.

One student protester called herself the public safety liaison for the encampment. She spoke to Public Safety officers on duty Mark Johns and Rick Whitney on Sunday morning. She said the only rule the encampment is breaking is a Residential Life policy on camping on college grounds, and insofar as the protestors are not escalatory and do not block campus pathways, they are not breaking any other rules.

As of Tuesday afternoon, the student public safety liaison had spoken to Public Safety again, and confirmed that there was no change to the situation or the policies the protesters were breaking.

"Students are not expected to be in areas that are not regular living spaces. They should not use areas outside of their living spaces for storage unless authorized. The list of spaces excluded from student use includes any roof or outer surface of any Middlebury building," reads Middlebury's Residential Life Policies.

Residential Life did not respond to The Campus' request for comment.

The college confirmed that there are currently no plans for the Middlebury Police Department to get involved.

Glucksman and Patrick emphasized that involvement in the protest is open to anyone, and they welcome any level of engagement. Patrick said he plans to attend classes over the coming weeks, but Glucksman does not plan to leave the encampment for class or to eat meals in the dining hall.

"There's a general sense that people want to take risks, and that this moment — genocide in Gaza right now is not one where it feels right to continue going to classes and doing life as usual," Glucksman said.

About 600 students have been arrested at pro-Palestinian protests on at least 15 college campuses over the past week, according to Axios. Particularly prolific among recent protests was the arrest of 108 Barnard College and Columbia University students by the New York City Police Department, who were enlisted by Columbia University president Minouche Shafik, on April 18.

"It all started with Columbia but it's not going to end with Columbia," Glucksman said.

The Middlebury Student Government Association (SGA) passed a joint statement in solidarity with students at Barnard College, Columbia University and college across the country, in commitment to students' free speech and opposition to administrative abuse of students' liberties, on Friday, April 26. A number of other colleges' student government associations, Williams College, New York University, UC Berkeley and Cornell University, also signed the statement.

As of May 1, 587 alumni have signed an open letter to the college in support of the encampment. The alumni pledged to withhold all donations to Middlebury until it meets the encampment's demands.

The Middlebury chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) also passed a statement on May 1 supporting the right to protest as vital to academic freedom and the college's educational mission. "We appreciate the administration's decision to refrain from escalating by bringing the police or outside security to campus. We urge the administration to hold the course and to vigorously uphold this right to peaceful protest," the statement, supported by over half of the AAUP's 200-plus members, read.

At the Middlebury encampment, many students covered their faces with masks, and duct taped their tattoos to avoid being recognized by the press. The protestors also held a security workshop, which included de-escalation techniques, on Sunday afternoon.

"This is our way of standing in solidarity and putting all of our efforts right now towards the people of Gaza. And everything else is secondary. That is the most important message we want to share," Glucksman said.

Editor's note: Managing Editor Ryan McElroy '25 and Editors-at-Large Charlie Keohane '24 and Sarah Miller '24 contributed reporting to this story

AUTHOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS TO GIVE 2024 COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

By MAGGIE REYNOLDS
Editor in Chief

Terry Tempest Williams, an author, naturalist and social justice advocate, will deliver the 2024 Middlebury Commencement address.

Williams has written over 20 books on environmental advocacy topics ranging from ecology and wilderness preservation to women's health and the relationship between culture and nature. Her 1991 memoir "Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place" has received international recognition for its exploration of her relationship to Mormonism and her mother's diagnosis with ovarian cancer, interwoven with natural history of the flooding of the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, near Williams' childhood home in Utah.

"Terry Tempest Williams is a longtime hero of mine," Jack Byrne, dean of Environmental Affairs and Sustainability and director of the Franklin Environmental Center, said in an announcement from the college. "I have the greatest admiration and emotional resonance for her writing and how she sees the world. I know our graduating students will find great solace and inspiration from her as they continue their journeys beyond Middlebury."

Williams will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at the college's commencement ceremony on May 26.

Williams is currently a writer in residence at Harvard Divinity School. She also writes periodically for the New Yorker, the New York Times, Orion magazine and the Progressive, as well as for international anthologies as a voice for environmental consciousness.

Williams received the Robert Marshall Award from the Wilderness Society in 2006, the highest honor the society grants to American citizens. She has also been recognized with awards from the Western American Literature Association, the Center for the American West and the Sierra Club.

Williams' work as a writer and activist were influenced substantially by her upbringing in Salt Lake City, within sight of the Great Salt Lake. She graduated from the University of Utah in 1978 with a bachelor's degree in English and in 1984 with a Master of Science degree in environmental education.

She published her first book shortly after in 1984 while working as a teacher in Montezuma Creek, Utah, in the Navajo Nation. Additional books Williams has written over her four decade-long career include "An Unspoken Hunger: Stories from the Field" (1994), "Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert" (2001), "Finding Beauty in a Broken World" (2008), "The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America's National Parks" (2016) and "The Moon is Behind Us: 30 Letters in Response to 30 Moons" (2021).

Williams' social justice work extends beyond her writing. She has testified before Congress on women's health issues, as well as on committing acts of civil disobedience against nuclear testing in the Nevada desert and against the Iraq War.

President Laurie Patton highlighted the connection between Williams' work and the college's environmental goals in the announcement. "Her ideas resonate deeply with our students and inspire many of Middlebury's long-term sustainability goals," Patton said.

The college will also award honorary degrees to five other individuals at the commencement ceremony.

Jon Castiglione is in his 42nd season on Red Sox radio, and is the longest serving radio broadcaster in Boston sports history. He was also inducted into the Red Sox Hall of Fame in 2014 and 2022.

Michael R. Katz served as the dean of the Language Schools and Schools Abroad at Middlebury, as well the C.V. Starr Professor of Russian and East European Studies. Katz retired from full-time teaching in 2010, but continues to teach occasional J-Term courses at Middlebury.

Linda Cliatt-Wayman is an education leader, who has been featured on ABC World News Tonight and Nightline. In 2016, she was named a Top 50 Finalist for the Global Teacher Prize out of 8,000 nominees internationally.

Emily Welty is the chair of Peace and Justice Studies at Pace University, where she teaches classes focused on nonviolence, humanitarianism and transitional justice. Welty is a part of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), where she works on faith-based engagement in nuclear disarmament.

Matthew Breay Bolton is a professor of political science at Pace University, and a part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, like Welty. Bolton was appointed by New York City Council Speaker Adrienne Adams to the city's Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Advisory Committee in 2023.

Commencement will take place on May 26 at 10 a.m. on the quad downhill from the chapel.

COURTESY PHOTO/BEINECKE RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY
Williams, a current writer in residence at Harvard Divinity School, will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at the college's commencement ceremony on May 26.

IN OPPOSITION TO SGA'S SOLIDARITY STATEMENT AND IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS

Op-Ed

Shane Silverman *is a member of the class of 2024.5 and an opinions editor.*

This past week, yet another cycle of the free speech debate has embroiled American colleges and universities. It started on April 17, when students built an unauthorized encampment on Columbia's central quad as University President Minouche Shafik testified before the House Committee on Education to defend against accusations of antisemitism. The following day, President Shafik called the New York Police Department (NYPD) to clear the protestors on trespassing charges. Half of the arrested students were enrolled at Barnard and faced disciplinary actions such as interim suspensions, but nearly all of them have made agreements with their administrators to return to school. In a significant escalation this Tuesday, the same protestors barricaded themselves inside Columbia's academic buildings and briefly took numerous hostages before being forcibly removed by the NYPD. The unrest in New York has precipitated similar demonstrations across the country, including here at Middlebury.

On April 26, the Middlebury student senate voted to sign a joint statement expressing solidarity with the protestors and condemning Columbia and Barnard's administrations. Proponents of the measure argued that it was important to respond to abuses against student protestors and show firm support for free expression. I agree with this sentiment, but I proudly cast the sole opposition vote because the joint statement was insufficient to support student activists and communicate the boundaries of productive demonstration. I urged the Senate to consider a more relevant conversation on our unique community, but they decided the best course of action was to sign a petition. I am disappointed that my peers thought this would be enough to meet the moment, but in this op-ed, I hope to communicate what was left unsaid.

First, the joint statement is written by Barnard's SGA and is merely a ploy to get their constituents out of trouble while only paying lip service to free expression. The authors paint a narrative that the protestors were fully within their right to assemble and entirely peaceful, but this is not the case. They deceptively omit information about how the demonstration violated Columbia University's community norms and was infiltrated by extremists who called for violence against pro-Israeli students. By infringing on other students' ability to learn and harboring incidents of harassment, the protest fell outside the realm of protected speech. When the NYPD came to clear the demonstration, it was to promote a fair environment for student expression and ensure the school's educational mission continued. A selective portrayal of the event sprinkled with a few free-speech buzzwords was not the resounding defense of students' rights you deserved to hear. It was a plea to rescue disruptive Barnard students who undermined the tenets of productive expression.

Second, the fact that the statement functioned as a petition, and not a genuine statement on free speech, made it a purely performative act. Worse, by the time SGA voted on April 26, nearly all of the suspended Barnard students had returned to their studies. With the central issue of the statement already resolved, one is forced to ask what an endorsement from Middlebury's SGA will do for anyone. And even if the students had not reached agreements with their school, are we to believe that the very sight of our signature would compel a Barnard administrator to change course? In fact, some of my fellow senators agree with me on this point; the statement's purpose was not to make meaningful change but rather to appear virtuous for our constituents online. I am deeply disappointed in my peers who tell themselves that virtue signaling promotes peace or serves our community. Quite to the contrary, these actions directly inhibit the development of a more just world by distracting us from using our power effectively. If likes and shares are the extent of our ambitions, then that will be the extent of our impact.

This leads me to my final reason for opposing a joint statement: it does nothing to serve the needs of Middlebury students, particularly the activists who worry about administrative abuses or confrontations with police. Many students are worried about being punished for exercising their right to speak after seeing disturbing scenes from across the country; I see this as a serious concern, but I find it unacceptable that the senate's strategy to comfort fears and support speech is by merely signing a statement written by another student government. I believe our constituency deserves to hear directly from their leaders a message unique to them; the three-sentence email communication on April 27 did not meet the moment.

Having watched the demonstrations unfold at Columbia and Middlebury, I am only more convinced I made the correct decision to vote against the joint statement. The belief that it was an appropriate response rests on the insulting assumption that Middlebury's activists are comparable to those in New York. While Columbia's demonstration is defined by harassment, academic disruption, and the destruction of school property, Middlebury's is a welcoming and educational environment that operates within our community's guidelines. In fact, to ensure they are not antagonistic, our activists have developed their own standards, including a strong intolerance for hate, a communal mindset, and mandatory sobriety. Their mature methods keep the conversation focused on Palestine, unlike the chaotic New York demonstrators who's actions direct attention to themselves and away from their cause. This week has only affirmed my conviction that Middlebury's community is vastly different from Barnard's and Columbia's. I wish my peers on SGA could have realized this was the case and decided against supporting a movement inherently hostile to free and fair speech.

Ask any Middlebury student, regardless of their political affiliation, and they will tell you how proud they are to see their peers peacefully express their beliefs. To the students demonstrating on campus, thank you for organizing more responsibly, respectfully and productively than your Barnard counterparts. In just a few days, you've provided an unmatched value to the Middlebury experience. I'm proud to see you sacrifice your comfort for a cause you believe in, all the while demonstrating the value of free expression. To the entire student body, you deserve to hear that your student leaders support your right to free expression and denounce non-productive speech, harassment and unruly behavior. And to the faculty and administration, we value your help in maintaining Middlebury as a space for open discussion. Let us all work together to see a peaceful end of the semester.

RA'S: THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE

Op-Ed

Marlow Saucier *is a member of the class of 2024.*

Residential Life (ResLife) is a lifestyle more than it is a job. During my four years at Middlebury, I've been an Residential Assistant (RA) for three and I am the Head RA of Hepburn Hall this year. Legitimately, some of the kindest and most open-minded people I have met on campus have been those I have met through ResLife. It takes a special kind of person to be deeply invested in creating spaces where people can be held as themselves and supported through the shared experience of living with strangers, in a space more diverse and challenging than most incoming students have ever experienced. Reslife staff members are seen as the "last line of defense" in a system that creates an environment of student distress.

Apparently, "RA" has become a part of the way I am described to people. "Marlow, Senior, curly hair, ResLife?" This stressed me out for quite some time. I thought that people might see me as authoritative, patronizing or hypocritical. Then, one of my friends highlighted that some of the coolest people they've met on campus are RAs. Generally compassionate, altruistic, and genuine people, maintaining empathy as a core pillar of your 24/7 occupation, while also being a full-time student, is a huge level of responsibility, and takes a great deal of care.

Being an RA at Middlebury is incredibly different than it is at many of the large universities in the country. My good friend, who is an RA at Indiana University, and I bonded over our ResLife experience, and having made the majority of our friends during the incredible amount of training and long nights of duty. Her job, however, is much more focused on the policing, rule-enforcement, safety-patrol aspects of the position than RAs at Middlebury are encouraged to focus on. Instead, we primarily stress the importance of community, of checking in with residents and building relationships as well as providing a person a place of trust and a touchpoint in the whirlwind (that sometimes becomes a sinkhole) of Middlebury. To make sure that people don't fall through the cracks, we are "the last line of defense."

On a campus where mental health is a pervasive issue, and where many of us, as students as well, also struggle with our own well-being, the level of responsibility that many of us feel to keep our residents afloat is overwhelming and contributes to the mental load that we already deal with as members of this community where struggle is incredibly normalized. ResLife staff members and strong hall communities are not stand-ins for systems of student support and an environment that fosters student welfare. There is a lovely metaphor that I was introduced to by a beloved professor about babies being thrown in the river. It goes something like this:

"You're sitting by a river, having a lovely little picnic with your friends, when suddenly you see a baby floating downstream. Obviously, you jump to action, trying to grab and save the baby. But, once you get into the water, you see more babies rushing toward you."

How long do you spend tiring yourself out, hoisting babies out of the water, until you storm upstream to find the asshole throwing them in to begin with? How long can you rely on the incredible amount of passion, energy and emotional labor of bright young community members to care for one another in a system that repeatedly breaks them down?

ResLife has to be one of the pillars of driving change at this institution — we live together, whether we like it or not. How can we better build community, while knowing that this is not the only thing that we need to support student wellness on campus? How can we ask what is reasonable from students who are not mental health professionals, and also living their own lives?

During training this year, a new staff member who was my resident last year shared with me that they wished they had known how much ResLife staff actually do. We are not here to police you, or to slap you on the wrist. We do this work because we care about this community, and I can tell you that we are doing the best we can.

Sarah Says: That's why they call them the blues

Op-Ed

Sarah Miller *is a member of the class of 2024 and an Editor At Large.*

On a semi-weekly basis, Sarah Miller shares her thoughts on culture and campus life.

Every April, when the days get long again and we shed our winter coats, I remember that I am an essentially joyful person and am, perhaps more importantly, committed to cultivating joy. This is the writerly way of saying I suffer from a low-grade form of seasonal depression. Seasonal Affectiveness Disorder (SAD) is estimated to affect as many as six in 100 people and is more common among women and in geographic regions like New England. When spring comes, I'm always surprised to watch the cobwebs clear from my heart like slush evaporating under the sun.

My seasonal depression, and a more ambivalent sadness, illuminates how our stigmatization of sadness stymies our larger ability to process and heal.

I'm thinking beyond seasonal depression to a time in my life when I became the saddest girl at the party. No matter my best efforts to remain upbeat, my face announced my misery like a siren. I'd get asked by friends and strangers if I was okay.

Eventually, I learned to leave the party early.

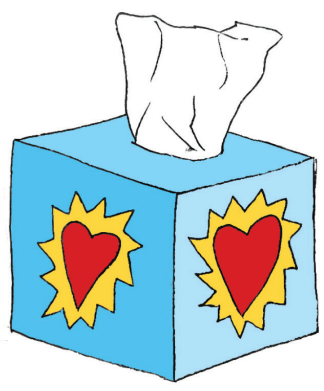
At the same time, I was deeply anxious about the hitch in my emotional life. By all accounts, my life was pretty incredible and I was ashamed to not revel in it more. So, I approached my sadness with my regular relentless attitude; I meditated daily, exercised three to four times a week, and yet, I was still sad, which compounded my frustration and, yes, my sadness.

Yet, feeling "blue" is a natural aspect of the human condition. What would it mean to look on these feelings without judgment and even as capable of teaching us?

Sadness makes us uncomfortable. Very early on, we learn to talk around it. We diminish, pathologize and suggest it will get better soon. Do we say these things because we believe them? Or is it because we're afraid of bringing the vibe down and afraid to admit our optimism might be more socially incentivized than true?

Taylor Swift's new song "I can do it with a broken heart" brags "You know you're good when you can even do it/With a broken heart/You know you're good, I'm good/'Cause I'm miserable/And nobody even knows." On Spotify, this song is accompanied by images of Swift on her Eras tour, the highest grossing music tour in history. Her lyrics suggest ideal womanhood is not defined by the absence of pain, but the ability to marshal it in service of billion dollar profits.

Perversely, I began to love my sad drunk self. Like a ventriloquist's dummy, she gave word to what my sober self could not. During most of my waking hours I am a bubbly, compulsively friendly person with an affect that verges on a mid-Atlantic valley girl. There are lots of



SKILES ROBERT-SALVADOR

earnest compliments and "OMGs."

At some point, I learned to present my pain through this vantage. I offered it up easily, but usually couched in the punchline of a joke where I remained the self-deprecating, forever plucky heroine.

The sadness wasn't gone when I was doing those things, enjoying myself even, and welcoming her in felt like getting in touch with an old and familiar friend.

I'll admit I probably entertain a friendlier relationship with sadness than most people. At the peak of my melancholy, I was lucky to be enrolled in the English department's Advanced Poetry Workshop, where channeling my emotional storms was homework. These poems were nothing remarkable, but like a slightly more artful diary, they helped me organize my emotional reservoirs for other writing.

In the twenty-first century, melancholy is a feminized — which is to say delegitimized — emotion, and all genders are conscious of deflecting it lest they risk their participation in the arena of "serious" thought.

Essayist Leslie Jamison explains this "isn't a shift in deep feeling (we understand these women still hurt) but a shift away from the wounded affect — these women are aware that 'woundedness' is overdone and over-rated… they guard against those moments when melodrama or self-pity might split their careful seams of intellect."

In the popular show "Girls," roommates Marnie and Hannah yell "You are the wound," at each other, because there is nothing more pejorative to the modern, emancipated woman than getting caught acting whiny.

Of course, we're all "the wound."

Like yours, my body is an inventory of wounds. There are the obvious ones (the scar on my right arm from leaning against the ballet mirror when I should have been practicing third position — I've always been a dreamer) and the ones that lurk below the skin — every major and minor heartbreak and the bones in my ankle that didn't heal quite right.

Then in February something unexpected happened. In the mosh of a Winter Carnival party, crushed and elbowed on all sides, I was content. Furthermore, I couldn't remember the last time a night was overturned by ambivalent melancholy. The simple explanation for the mood change is that my Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) homework had finally paid off, but I prefer to think of it like passing along a lingering cold. The antibodies cleared my infection, and I was free.

I don't know if I'm any better at expressing my low moods, but I've ceased trying to evaluate their legitimacy. Trying to out-think, to intellectualize emotional processes only exacerbates the wound.

Now that college is largely in my rearview mirror, I find myself thinking of all those lonely nights fondly.

Why?

This girl was no model of emotional health. She was selfish, melodramatic and in many respects missing perspective.

She was also honest: here I am, this is where it hurts.

STUDENTS LOVE THEIR CLUBS — THE COLLEGE SHOULD, TOO

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of The Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Upon perusing the results of Zeitgeist 6.0, we noticed an interesting change from last year's results: Middlebury students now rate student organizations as more important than outdoor recreation, with more respondents indicating a higher level of value placed on their clubs than time outdoors.

While the typical image of a student here may conjure visions of hiking the full TAM, tossing around a frisbee on a sunny, lazy Sunday afternoon or diving into the Gorge, student organizations are essential to the fabric of our school community. However, what is not crucial are layers of bureaucracy surrounding our student organizations.

Respondents to this year's Zeitgeist survey overwhelmingly expressed dissatisfaction with the SAO. Sixteen percent of respondents were extremely dissatisfied with the SAO, while 23% were somewhat dissatisfied and just 7% were very satisfied with the organization. These numbers of dissatisfaction have only grown in recent years – 15% of respondents reported extreme dissatisfaction with the SAO in 2023 and 8% in 2022. At the same time, 44% of respondents to this year's survey rated student organizations as a four or a five on a scale of 1-5 in terms of their importance to respondents' lives on campus.

As this discrepancy between SAO satisfaction and club enthusiasm shows, the systems in place are complex and ill-suited to the dynamic nature of our student body. We call on the college to reconsider how to increase flexibility in creating, operating and funding organizations to nurture student interests. Zeitgeist has shown that the enthusiasm exists for student organizations to play a crucial role on campus — let's seize that opportunity to reconsider how they may best be utilized in the future.

In theory, the SAO provided an equal opportunity for all student organizations to raise funds through the Join the Club initiative. In practice, however, the initiative required jumping through complicated bureaucratic hoops and schmoozing with alumni to get donations. It worked unequally in favor of clubs with wealthy students and club alumni, and forced students to take on the extra burden of advertising and fundraising on top of their academic responsibilities and work for their student organizations.

The Office of Advancement is working tirelessly to raise $600 million for its For Every Future Campaign, launched in October 2023. While the campaign plans to direct funds toward the so-called goals of "access," "academic excellence," "experience" and "annual giving," nowhere in it are funding student organizations referenced as a priority of the campaign. Why is the college focused on funding programs at Bread Loaf and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, while students are forced to panhandle their parents and alumni just to fund student organizations right here on campus?

Many students have described feeling frustrated by a seemingly never-ending process in which it feels that though the SAO's default is to say no to requests, rather than welcoming new ideas. The issue has been worsened by the implementation of the a three-tier system for club sports funding, which limits the amount of funding granted to some club sports. Two recent op-eds cited lack of funding as an essential argument used by the SAO, especially given the fact that new clubs can only be allotted up to $1,000. But what about student investment? The student activity fee is $500. Other areas of tuition have tangible effects — $67,100 goes towards our education and $19,250 goes towards our housing and meals. Where are the benefits of the student activities fee? We are glad that large, successful club sports, such as crew and frisbee, receive consistent funding, but a diversity of well-funded student organizations is vital to a vibrant campus life.

We believe that the student relationship with the SAO should be collaborative and enthusiastic, not adversarial and discouraging, as it sometimes feels currently. Anecdotes abound of punitive actions against organizations and the lingering threat of adding leftover debts to the tuition bill of any given organization's treasurer. While we understand that not every request can get approved, and many of the SAO's policies are necessary and reasonable to run an organized system, the college should allocate more resources to matching student enthusiasm and giving our clubs the necessary financial support. Middlebury teaches us to dream big — why can't it fund those dreams?

It often falls on the leaders of these organizations to do the administrative work of their clubs and advocate fiercely for their events, travel, transportation, fundraisers and more. We are not blind to the reality of the other side, however. The college must provide more staff members to address the growing demand for student clubs. Just as it is unfair for student leaders to shoulder such a heavy burden, so too do we have sympathy for those in SAO who are overwhelmed by the day-to-day management of a bureaucratic, dysfunctional system that seems a relic of a different era — a different Middlebury, even.

At the heart of this issue — and arguably at the heart of Zeitgeist — is what kind of community we envision this college to be. In ten years time, students here will likely still be hiking the TAM, or tossing around a frisbee on Battell Beach. Now is the time to consider whether student organizations can continue to grow and thrive at the college, or if they will fade into the background in the whirlwind of our four years here.

What club lacrosse shows about the difficulty of starting a club

Op-Ed

***Rosella Graham** is a member of the class of 2025 and **Francesca Bradley** is a member of the class of 2025.5.*

For all the students who eagerly toured Middlebury College before committing, you surely heard some version of the line, "It is always possible to start a new club on campus if it doesn't already exist! You just need ten or more interested members."

In reality, picture a group of 71 members, including three frustrated juniors, who have been trying to start a women's lacrosse club for two and a half years. It turns out that the process of starting a student organization is not quite as accessible as the college preaches to its students. Despite our long effort, no real progress has been made towards establishing a women's lacrosse club at Middlebury.

Our request is simple.

We want to be able to play lacrosse with other Middlebury students who miss the camaraderie and environment that comes with playing a team sport. While we would ideally like to travel and play competitively in the future, our request right now is to be recognized as a club sport by the Student Activities Office (SAO). Our ultimate goal is to establish a space that welcomes students of all skill levels who want to compete, improve and spend time with people who also enjoy the sport of lacrosse. We feel that accomplishing this goal would benefit the Middlebury community by creating a more accessible and casual team environment than the varsity team.

In the fall of 2022, connected by a shared interest of starting a women's club lacrosse team on campus, we began meeting and completing the application process as directed by the SAO. With such a competitive and well-ranked varsity women's lacrosse team, we found it hard to believe that there had not already been efforts to start a club team. From the very beginning, we had a lot of student support and eager players ready to get out on the field, which fueled our motivation to get started.

In October 2022, we began the process of applying through the SAO, who encouraged us to draft a constitution, propose a budget and meet with interested players. A month later, however, we met with the SAO, whose previous optimism turned to concern that there was not enough college funding to support an intercollegiate contact-sport like lacrosse at the club level.

Each year, Middlebury students pay $500 towards Student Activities Fees, not to mention an-ever increasing tuition (currently $86,350 including room and board). Why are we paying these specific fees allocated towards SAO if our money is not going to benefit our own interests?

According to SAO, a new organization is allotted a maximum of $1,000 dollars for their first year, and can request more if funding is insufficient. Our cost estimates for a women's club lacrosse team were $930.79 for lacrosse balls, sticks, eye guards and a shooting guard.

We also suggested a number of fundraisers to aid in the financial burden including various bake sales, reaching out to alumni and implementing membership dues at the beginning of each season. If the SAO was not able to fully support us, we were willing to put in the work to help support ourselves.

After weeks of speaking to other women's club lacrosse teams in the New England Women's Lacrosse League and Middlebury athletics officials who all offered advice on safety, budgeting and extra equipment to use, we met with the Student Organization Registration Committee to present our proposal to be a new club. Up to this point, we were met with assurance from SAO and other athletics individuals involved in the new organization process that our preparation was sufficient and we would likely get approval.

However, we were shocked to see that by March 2023, SAO did not give us approval to create a new student organization. They argued that the risk mitigation measures were insufficient and that we were low priority being deemed a three tier sport.

Their dissatisfaction with our proposed safety measures was another example of inconsistent information on their part, as they previously agreed that having volunteer student EMTs from Middlebury and Castleton University would be appropriate safety measures. We even went further by ensuring players sign a release form to promise accountability to participate and throughout all of this, SAO continued to appeal to our offers and move us along in the application process.

The three-tier system only allows the addition of club sports that do not already exist at a varsity level such as crew, equestrian, sailing and quadball. For club teams that were established before the tier system, their status has been grandfathered in and they will keep their club status. With the implementation of the tier system, it is no longer possible for groups to attain club status. Instead, they must be a recreational team, meaning they do not play competitively at an intercollegiate level.

Despite the consequences of this new system being immediate, we have not found this in a handbook or written form. Two other students we talked to had also gone to the SAO to start a club sport, and when they asked to see the policy, they found there was none.

"You can't find it anywhere. There's no handbook. There's a policy that we've never seen and it's not available for us to see anywhere. It's really frustrating," one student said.

It is disappointing that so many eager Middlebury students have faced the same frustrations with the process of starting organizations on campus. The time that goes into filling out endless forms, back and forth emails that end with no results and tracking people down in departments all over campus is exhausting. To us, and other non-varsity athletes, the goal is clear, but the process is convoluted. There is no successful, prescribed path of starting a club, besides the initial constitution and risk mitigation. What started with a simple ask has become a never-ending, exhausting battle. We have become tired of the disappointing answers. When we started this process as first year students, we were filled with excitement at the fact that we could really start a club lacrosse team. The joy, competition, grit and team culture that many of us experienced in our younger years is at the core of our mission. Throughout this process, we have interacted with so many others who share similar memories and values that they gained from lacrosse. We strive to bring these qualities to Middlebury in the form of a club lacrosse team.

As current juniors, this process has begun to feel like a chore. How did something so simple in practice become a complicated mess of legality, bureaucracy and unresolved appeals?

In the pre-Covid years, Middlebury had a strong junior-varsity program, including teams that did have varsity counterparts. In the fall of 2019, the JV program was cut due to a change in NCAA medical guidelines and because it had been difficult to create routine schedules. The backing from varsity teams and coaches has had little to no impact on the SAO's decision, despite having a significant impact on the clubs' abilities to function thanks to their generous donations of equipment and gear.

Going into this process over two years ago, we were well prepared to work with the SAO through the challenges and obstacles that approving a women's club lacrosse team would present. However we did not imagine that the process would be quite so inefficient. From our perspective, we thought the meetings with the SAO and Student Organization Registration Committee were successful and that the school was likely to approve the club, with some modifications. After month-long delays in waiting for email replies from SAO, we cannot help but wish that the club sports system at Middlebury was more accessible.

Still, we think that it is important to recognize the efforts of the SAO and do not mean for any of our grievances to be geared toward any individual. Rather, our frustrations lie in the structural faults that have prevented us from forming a club based around an incredibly basic idea: providing a space for girls who have carried their love of the sport with them to college and want to continue the community and competition they once found in lacrosse.

At a school like Middlebury, it is common that many students played some level of sports in high school or before, and we have met many students who have expressed interest in playing a club-level sport. We believe Middlebury's community would benefit with the addition of a women's club lacrosse team. We are not asking for thousands of dollars, brand new uniforms, or the highest end equipment, but rather the support and recognition to gather on campus and play lacrosse a few hours a week.

Our unofficial group of girls continues to grow in interest, with so many eager players excited to continue playing lacrosse in a competitive field, yet as upperclassmen we still cannot offer much without club approval. We will continue to research ways to make this goal happen, but the chances of becoming an official student organization do not seem like more than a pipe dream unless some measures drastically change within SAO.

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The Middlebury Campus

WANAS showcases solidarity with Palestine

By MANDY BERGHELA
Local Editor

The Middlebury West Asian and North African Students Association (WANAS) hosted a fundraising showcase dedicated to celebrating the voices of West Asian and North African voices on campus at Wilson Hall on Friday, April 26.

The showcase consisted of 12 different performances including traditional dances, poetry readings in both Arabic and English, film screenings and musical performances as a testament to the beautiful tapestry of Middle Eastern and North African culture.

The showcase was entitled "Solidarity with Palestine" in honor of the more than 30,000 lives that have been lost in Gaza over the past six months. All of the proceeds from the tickets sold were donated to the Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF), an organization that serves Palestinian families, addressing both urgent humanitarian needs and longer-term recovery efforts in Gaza.

"This showcase was important to me because it was the first time [Middle East and North African] students could show their talents and passion in context to their identity," Islam Abushareah '26.5, a member of WANAS, told The Campus. "Self-identity and self-expression are repressed to a degree that forces Arab American children to grow up, wanting to be like the majority of their classmates."

WANAS was founded by Kaveh Abu Khaleel '26 and Mars Etgü '26 last spring with a mission to provide a community for West Asian and North African students at Middlebury and to advocate for those students with the college administration.

The showcase began with a moment of silence for the lives lost in Gaza, as well as an opening speech by Student Government Association (SGA) President Abed Abbas '24.

"We will remember our dances, we can remember our traditions, we can remember our songs, we can remember our hummus, and we can remember our land for a very long time, and there is nothing that can happen that can make us forget, and free Palestine," Abbas said. His closing words were met by an eruption of applause from the audience.

The showcase consisted of two short film screenings by hip-hop and contemporary Palestinian dancers Mohammed "Barges" Smahneh and Samaa Wakim from the Yaa Samar! Dance Theatre! (YSDT). Both films were emotionally raw contemporary pieces that were shot while the filmmakers were dancing, and they each captivated audience members for the unique perspectives they presented on Palestine.

Earlier this spring, Smahneh visited Middlebury students to host a Movement Matters Dabke Masterclass, which was open to the entire campus community. Dabke is a Levantine folk dance that has been performed in cultural moments of both celebration and resistance within the Arab world.

The traditional Dabke dance was also performed with the song "Ana Dami Falastini" ("My Blood is Palestinian") by students Güler Ayçiçek '27, Zhanning Zhao '27, Joshua Glucksman '24.5, Aren Lou '27, along with co-presidents Abu Khaleel and Etgü. The dance brought the audience to a standing ovation.

Other dances included a riveting contemporary solo piece by Zach Okayli Masaryk '25.5, set to the song "Long Live Palestine" by Lowkey. The energy in the room was high during this performance, as Masaryk captured the struggle, resilience and aspirations of the Palestinian people through beautiful movement across the stage. The lyrics were powerful, featuring samples of speeches and news reports that served as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for justice.

Poetry played a major role in the showcase, as different poets from the Middlebury community came to the stage to read their own words, captivating the audience with the power of language, imagery and the underlying importance of justice and solidarity.

Arabic teaching assistant Raghad Sayyed performed "In my soul there is a home," an original piece she has been working on for the past two months. The poem brought many audience members to tears with its testament to the pain of being overwhelmed as a Palestinian and the need to be strong for others and for oneself amidst all the lives being lost each day.

"I was overwhelmed," Sayyed said. "Although there is war and disaster and genocide, I need to continue my daily work, whether that be teaching, or as a sister, or being part of a family, or just being a supporter. This took a lot of energy from me to be strong enough for these people."

Although originally written in her native language of Arabic, Sayyed's poem was performed both in Arabic and English, and reminded audiences of the strength and perseverance needed during hard times.

"I wrote this poem to remind myself that I can be strong, and this strength I took from Palestine itself, because Palestine has rebuilt itself war after war," Sayyed said.

"I wanted to share my feelings truthfully and honestly. I wanted to remind others that they need to be strong for their countries and we can learn that from Palestine and the people in Gaza, during all these years, they have been rebuilding themselves and have been stronger each time," she added.

A few students from the Middlebury orchestra also arranged a piece for the showcase. The students, Elise Chan '24, Greg Marcinik '25.5, Asher Holton '25, Rowan Cleary '27, and Abushareah call themselves the MaqaMidd Hijaz, a play on the Arabic scale they used called the Maqam Hijaz.

"It was easier to find a chord, or scale, commonly used in the Middle East and creating a song based off it." Abushareah said. "Using the scale, we improvised every part and put it together like a jigsaw puzzle."

The piece began with an impressive solo by Cleay on an authentic Jordanian oud. The oud is a traditional Middle Eastern instrument, similar to a lute, with 11 strings grouped with 6 courses. The song they had created also featured western instruments, such as the clarinet and violin.

"It was impossible to find a piece of music that we could play, which is why we made our own." Abushareah explained. "Arabic music does not translate to Western format or vice versa. After researching online for hours, we found most Middle Eastern sheet music that does not sound like a Western stereotype is written for Arabic instruments, and although there is some overlap between Western and Arab instruments, having sheet music not written in Arabic presented another hurdle."

Sayyed expressed what the showcase meant to her."This showcase was important to me not just because I am an Arab, or because I am Palestinian, but because I am human," she said."All I want is justice and peace."

MANDY BERGHELA/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A few students from the Middlebury Orchestra, who call themselves MaqaMidd Hijaz, arranged a piece for the showcase.

Ducking tradition: Dolci spices up dishes from its past

By CATHERINE GOODRICH, ACADIA KLEPEIS, JACK TORPEY
Arts & Culture Desk

Fresh off a year in the fragrant markets of Florence, Italy, the Forest kitchenettes just couldn't contain the culinary dreams of Jill Santopietro '99. Soon, she found herself at a roundtable discussion with Middlebury Dining. She recalled being nervous to present her big idea: a student-run restaurant.

It was an instant hit. With the support of Middlebury staff members — and an unlimited budget — Santopietro and her swiftly assembled team of volunteer cooks, servers and dishwashers got ready for the inaugural meal. At the time, 70 lucky diners squeezed into the Château for weekly Dolci dinners every Friday night.

Since 1998, the group has evolved, continuously responding to the passions of its staff members at the time. In 2005, wannabe-matchmakers hosted Blind Date Dolci. When Santopietro and the other founders reunited for Dolci's tenth birthday, they were served appetizers and finger food rather than four courses. This past fall, Dolci collaborated with the Knoll for the all-vegetarian "Knolci" menu, and just last month they hosted a "Ratatouille"-themed evening, complete with mushroom pastry, gnocchi and chocolate mousse in addition to the titular dish.

Like Dolci, Santopietro seems to have had nine lives. She has worked jobs ranging from food stylist to food writer, riggling in and out of different pockets of the culinary world. Across restaurants and in culinary school, "There wasn't a lot of the backstory of the food we were cooking," she recalled. Through her organization The Children's Food Lab, Santopietro goes into schools to teach about where food comes from. For example, she and her students will thresh wheat berries, grind the seeds, separate the bran and the germ, and discuss the effects of only eating white flour… all before making their own crackers.

"It's a certain kind of person that likes to feed other people," Santopietro said.

Luckily for us, students who like to feed people are in no short supply here at Middlebury.

When Kim Golding '99 reconnected with chef Peter Ross '78 at her 25th reunion last year, she was amazed to learn that Dolci was still active. Soon, Golding and Santopietro were connected with current head chef Sophia Giliberto '24, who was eager to meet the founders.

"We did this Zoom call, and a bunch of old Dolci members ended up coming," Giliberto said. "Jill [Santopietro] invited a bunch of her friends, and we invited a bunch of our friends, and it turned into a really cool conversation."

From that conversation about Dolci memories and the original menu came the idea that inspired this year's final meal. Head chef Margaux Eller '24 summed it up as a "history of Dolci dinner."

"The dishes that we're doing … are all based on old Dolci recipes," Eller said. "The founder wrote a cookbook, and there's a Dolci cookbook, and we tried to use some of these recipes and put our own flair on them to make dishes with our own creative touch."

For example, the main course of duck confit was adapted from an apricot chicken that the original Dolci team cooked up in '98. Santopietro recalled one of her chefs calling his mom to ask what went into the recipe. "It was like a bottle of mayonnaise, a bottle of ketchup and a bottle of apricot," she said, remembering how she thought it sounded disgusting at first. "It was one of our best dishes."

Unlike the Dolci founders, the Arts & Culture editors didn't receive formal invitations to last Friday's dinner, but with one press pass, one lottery win and one prayer-fueled waitlist entry, we made it to the flower-adorned table of our dreams. Our reactions to each course are dished up below.

"Some Crispy Apps": mushroom arancini and veggie tempura

Acadia's take: The arancini were my most-anticipated menu item, and they did not disappoint. Rich and creamy, the pearl-like texture is so satisfying.

Jack's take: My mom makes mean arancini, so I had high expectations. Dolci's spin on the Italian classic definitely cleared them. I still prefer the traditional risotto as the filling, but the mushroom twist proved that practically anything is delicious when it's rolled into a ball and dropped in a fryer.

Catherine's take: The arancini and tempura made for a first course that was perfectly crispy, easy to divvy up among the table and whetted my appetite for what was to come.

"A Hot Take on Caesar!": grilled romaine salad

Acadia's take: When first I tried to visualize a hot salad, my brain stuttered. As it turns out, the literal option was the correct one. I was hesitant (and, admittedly, slightly amused) to see a full head of uncut lettuce on my plate, but ultimately I liked it. My anchovy-free dressing was delicious and buttery rich despite being vegan, and the lettuce's crunchiness was enhanced by the grilling, which also added a charred flavor that was fun and unexpected in a salad.

Jack's take: As a salad skeptic, I was my table's resident lettuce donor.

Catherine's take: There's something conceptually beautiful about the idea of a hot salad, and the execution of this dish was nothing short of delightful. To me, Dolci is at its best when it's clear the chefs are having fun — a quality that came through in this "hot take."

"Duck, Duck, CONFIT": duck (or chickpea) confit, apricot and guajillo chile aioli, broccolini

Acadia's take: Crunchy chickpeas and a flavorful sauce atop well-toasted bread made this veggie alternative worthy of plan A. My stomach is rumbling just thinking about it.

Jack's take: I may have only eaten it once before, but this was the best duck I've ever had. Tender, juicy, and with a savory skin roasted just right, the bird paired well with the mild chile aioli and crisp broccolini. Dolci has set the standard by which all my future duck outings will be measured.

COURTESY PHOTO/MANAR AL-RIKABI

The final Dolci dinner of the semester featured mushroom arancini, grilled salads and duck confit.

Catherine's take: As a recreational vegetarian, this was my first time trying duck, and I was a huge fan of each component of the dish. The duck leg had a delicious golden-skinned outside and tender inside, paired with a tangy aioli that perfectly complemented the confit flavor.

"A Sweet Goodbye": green tea- and mocha-flavored mochi

Acadia's take: Those with the patience to let it thaw (or a strong spoon arm) were thrilled to discover the sweet, melty interior of this trendy Japanese dessert.

Jack's take: The dessert was — quite literally — rock solid, with smooth ice cream nestled inside balls of chewy rice cake that were frozen to perfection. As a chocoholic, I preferred the mocha flavor over the green tea, but both ended the night with palette-pleasing final bites.

Catherine's take: A fun, frozen sendoff. The mochi's flavor was almost as enjoyable as watching my tablemates turn their spoons into icepicks to hack away the sticky, chewy goodness.

Overall, the Arts & Culture team could not have been more pleased to share its first and final communal Dolci. The dinner was also the last for seniors Giliberto and Eller, close friends who have spent their time at Middlebury bonding over their shared passions for food and cooking.

"Sophia and I have always been big foodies," Eller said. "We knew freshman year [Dolci] did focaccia pop-ups out of the food truck, and we were like, 'We want to be involved in this club.'"

Four years and many special meals later, Giliberto encapsulated the Dolci that she and Eller are leaving behind for the next generation of student chefs and diners in one word: inclusivity.

"Something that we've tried to do in the time that I've been in Dolci has been to make it as inclusive as possible. So that means reshaping the board, trying to involve more people […] with different culinary backgrounds," Giliberto said. "We've tried to make it so that more people can experience Dolci."

Given the resounding success of this latest dinner, that's an experience that every Middlebury student should strive to partake in at least once. For any who still need convincing, just take it from Santopietro herself on the night of her Dolci homecoming – "It's such a pleasure to be here and to see what a little idea 25 years ago has become."

ART IN THE RAIN: DON'T NOCTURNE IT 'TIL YOU TRY IT

By VIRGINIA FRAU
Contributing Writer

Misty weather was no match for Middlebury student creatives, who filled the campus with musical, visual and experimental arts on April 27 at Nocturne, an annual campus-wide art festival.

Stepping outside of my building on Saturday night, I was met with a campus aglow: shimmering lamps and colorful string lights and small art installations were strewn from the top of Chapel Hill to the lawn in front of Davis Library. A live rendition of The Eagles' "Hotel California" echoed under a low-hanging veil of clouds as a breeze shook white petals from the nearby Magnolia tree.

The threat of rain drove many performances indoors and necessitated the use of tarps and tents to shield outdoor exhibits. Adapting to that night's weather was a community effort, according to Nocturne organizer and treasurer Lily Buren '26.

"We sent out a text saying, 'Hey, if anyone can come to the Gamut Room and help us last-minute brainstorm a rain schedule, that would be amazing,' and everyone came!" she said.

Before the drizzle set in, I made my way down towards Davis Family Library where two students — one sporting a white ski mask and navy suit jacket — were auctioning off various items to a crowd gathered on the steps outside. I watched as a decorative dorm "CAUTION" sign was traded for a Bobbi Brown lip gloss (this beat out a cigarette and a single Tic-Tac).

Then, I was drawn in by a brassy and ethereal voice, coming from McCullough Terrace where Sammy Jo Serell '27.5 and the rest of Feband (Owen Kelliher '27.5, Aidan Brennan '26.5, Maya Henning '25) performed Journey's "Separate Ways" under a tent. This early on in the night, as spirits were still rising, the crowd that gathered calmly swayed and nodded along to the music, with the exception of a small cluster of more rowdy dancers closer to the "stage."

Minutes later, I stopped by the Chapel, where several installations had found shelter from the rain. Out front, JusTalks had set up a table for community painting and discussion. Inside, Yarn and Yap – a knitting/crocheting club – had displayed their first creation: an "ever-growing blanket" made up of individually knitted and crocheted squares that had then been stitched together. Closer to the chancel sat an installation called Bead Tree. Beaded necklaces were strung from the banisters under which posters on the floor read "draw and write; grab some beads."

At 8:05 p.m., I squeezed myself into the Gamut Room where the Manganesians (Luke Parkerson '26.5, Lincoln Pierce '26.5, Alistair Nalle '26.5, Nick Brodie '27.5) were playing "Say It Ain't So" by Calpurnia. This performance was followed up by Mt. Joy's "Silver Lining," during which the band showcased some sweet, folksy vocals amidst perhaps overly harsh instrumentals. Once the crowd brought to the band's attention that bassist and vocalist Alister Nalle's microphone was turned off, his voice pleasantly rounded out a cover of "Everybody Talks" by Neon Trees.

I later caught the end of The Hero and The Waitress (Catherine Kish '24, Peyton Mader '24, Kai Fukuda '23.5, Jon Jon March '23.5, Eli Richardson '24, Daniel Allen '24.5) graceful cover of "Closer to Fine" by Indigo Girls, before heading inside to Wilson Cafe. There, at around 8:30 p.m., the improv group Middlebrow performed Mundaneprov and spent some fifteen minutes committed to an insensitive "carrot-farming" concept. The show proceeded to deftly transition between topics like Taylor Swift and divorce law.

The exquisitely dressed Dr. College USA (Eliza Cleary '24.5, Rowan Cleary '27, Jacob Bradley '24, Jude Seo '24.5, Brett Sorbo '24.5, Nora Brown '24) started their set in Wilson Hall around 9:00 p.m. They performed crooning parodies of songs like an investment banking-based version of The Beatles' "Don't Let Me Down," and showed off the especially sharp lyrics like, "I'll start wearing a pantsuit and learn how to do the hot girl walk" and "When I am a strategic brand consultant, I'll have everything I want."

Thirty minutes later, both Wilson Cafe and the Grille were packed with people waiting to watch a sneak-peak of RIDDIM dance troupe's upcoming spring performance. The cafe's stage was a bit small for the group's purposes, leaving the members squished but nonetheless able to captivate the audience with a brief teaser.

Along the busiest walk of the night, between McCullough and the Gamut Room, passersby stopped to take in Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)'s 'die-in.' Participants lay silently under a tree on top of tarps and reused trash bags. Beside them sat a sign that read, "We are alive – 33,000 are dead." In the words of organizer Islam Abushareah '26.5, SJP meant to "call on the attention of all Middlebury students to keep talking about Palestine," especially as students from universities like Columbia, Emory, and UT Austin "face substantial administrative repression."

At 9:53 p.m., Trail Magic (Ian Nolan '24.5, Quinn Donaldson '26.5, Orion Christian '26.5, Aidan Brennan '26.5) began their set in the Gamut Room with "The Gym" by Wolves of Glendale. Next was a soulful rendition of Noah Kahan's "Dial Drunk" followed by two lovely original songs. Standing in the crowd felt like being surrounded by reincarnations of Demi Lovato in the classic Disney Channel movie "Camp Rock," hearing again and again, "[They're] really good!"

Brennan later told me that the rotating nature of the performance (members switched instruments in between tracks) is an integral element of the band's communal character. "Usually we are a WOMP [Wednesday Open Mic Party] band (we play every week) so to play in our normal venue but have it filled to the gills with cheering lovely music-enjoywwers brought so much energy to our performance," Brennan said.

NOAH WILLSON / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

This year's Nocturne festival featured interactive art exhibits, dance and music groups, comedy and film.

At 10:30 p.m., I found myself back in Wilson Hall. I walked in to see Charlie Grossman '27 of Birdman Bounces (alongside June Su '27) clad in a graduation gown and papier-mâché wings at the very end of their set, an earnest and elegant piece of "performance art consisting of poetry and electronic music."

A mammoth crowd gathered as the last performer of the night, Backyard Jams (Keegan Gilsenan '25, Xander Bowles '26, John Burdett '26, Levi Goldberg '26.5, Jin Lee '25), set up on stage. Playing hits like "Can't Stop" by Red Hot Chili Peppers and a "Don't Let Me Down" reprise, the band wowed with excellent instrumentals and stunning vocals from Curran Amster '26. Most compelling, however, was the members' chemistry and practiced mental synchrony. The group's collegiate cool balanced with a clear attentiveness to one another to give the performance a memorable charm.

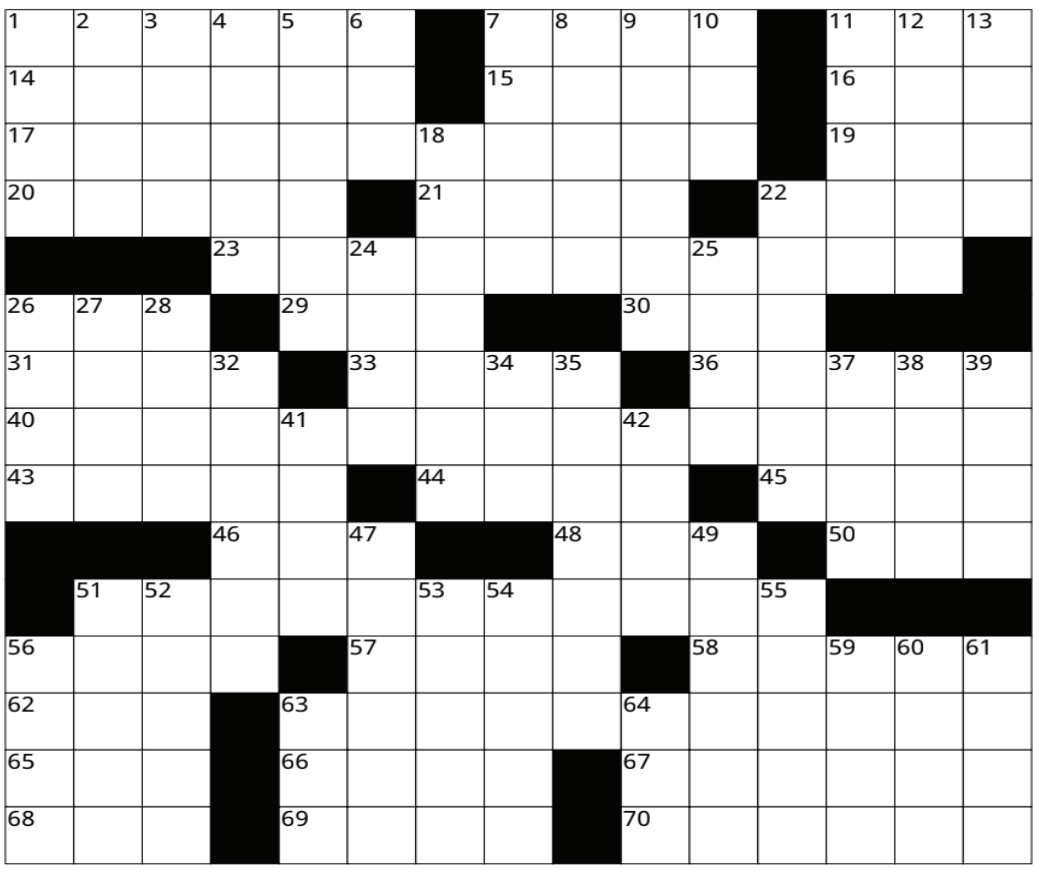
The festival ended in the chapel with music and an original video from Faith Wood '24.5 titled "Creating is Liberating" (featuring Corinne Lowmanstone '24.5, Wolf Moller '24.5, Diana Cortez '24, Olivia Dixon '24, Ella Bode '24, Mira Ward '24, Natalie Penna '24, Marissa Lewis '24, Tanya Chen '24, Victoria Shuster '25 and Matthew Gamez '25).

"I wanted to use my last Nocturne at Middlebury to reflect back the beauty I see in people when they're doing what they love — whether that be crocheting, skating, jumping in the gorge, or even just vibin' out to their favorite song — through doing what I love, filming," Woods said.

The night was a testament to both Middlebury as a community — passionate and creative, even when at odds with one another — as well as art itself. It was a reminder that art, its creation and enjoyment, is rarely singular. It is felt most powerfully, most prolifically, with others.

Chiseling Away

Egan Turner



ACROSS

1 Former breakfast aunt
7 King Khufu's resting place
11 Snap, crackle, ___
14 2024 Colts draft pick Mitchell
15 Give ___ to: refer or give credit
16 You can only learn this lang. in J-Term
17 Louvre attraction
19 "Barbie" actress Issa
20 Prank
21 Danish construction company?
22 Mountain-dwelling rabbit relative
23 Italy attraction
26 "Let's go!", to a texter
29 ___ Trek
30 Big digit?
31 Greek rainbow goddess
33 Root vegetable
36 "Barbie" director Gerwig
40 DC attraction
43 Internet connector
44 ___ avail
45 Comes to a close
46 Little bite
48 Shoe store
50 Midd. club sports governing body
51 India attraction
56 Taylor Swift's record breaking tour
57 Bell chime
58 Legislative body
62 Carry or drag
63 Middlebury district home to American Flatbread and Noonie's, and a hint to 17-Across, 23-Across, 40-Across, and 51-Across
65 Baton Rouge sch.
66 Small child
67 The R in RNG
68 Dir. from Voter to Davis
69 MLS predecessor
70 "Yeah, right!"

DOWN

1 Home to over half of Indonesia's population
2 Adam's home
3 ___ Blanc
4 Indigenous people of northern Canada
5 Middlebury's is the panther
6 Help out
7 COD or LOL player
8 "Hello, my name is ___ Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."
9 Antidepressant mentioned in Noah Kahan's "Your Needs, My Needs"
10 Commotion
11 Louvre locale
12 Japanese financial hub
13 Call for help
18 Gold or silver
22 South Dakota's capital
24 China has a Great one
25 Cartoon opossum
26 ___ & Media Culture
27 The Bee Gees or The Jonas Brothers, for example
28 Air current
32 Shakespeare wrote many
34 "My Chemical Romance" genre
35 Kris and Caitlyn's daughter
37 One, in Cologne
38 "Voila!"
39 "And..."
41 Leave out
42 ___ pit
47 Tropical fruit
49 "Peanuts" teacher talk
51 Triangular support
52 The ___: Dutch city
53 Blockheads
54 "Gravity Falls" twin
55 Pond birds
56 "The Great" actress Fanning
59 Islamabad language
60 Hershey toffee bar
61 "Game of Thrones" actress Bianco
63 3-Down abbr.
64 Ranch chaser?

ILSLEY LIBRARY EXPANSION VOTE TO TAKE PLACE ON MAY 7

By JULIA PEPPER
Senior Local Editor

The Ilsley Public Library, completed in 1924, sits in the center of downtown Middlebury. Though the building was expanded in 1977 and 1988, today, much of it is outdated, inaccessible and inflexible.

The Ilsley 100 Project — named for its 100 year anniversary — is a major renovation and expansion of the public library. The planned renovation will remove the previous additions to the library while preserving the historical 1924 building. It will add a two-story addition on the northeast side of the historical building and include the replacement of critical HVAC, elevator, plumbing, electricity and data ports.

Town residents will vote on a $4.5 million municipal bond to fund the expansions and renovations in a special election on May 7.

The construction plan is expected to cost $16,995,000, but only 25% of that cost, or $4.5 million, would come from local residents over the course of 25 years, according to Joe McVeigh, a volunteer member on the library's Board of Trustees and the chair of the Ilsley 100 Project Team. Most of the project's funding would come from other sources such as private donors, state and federal grants and an additional 1% sales tax, called a Local Option Tax.

"The property owners who pay taxes in Middlebury will need to pay for only about a quarter of the total amount — and that amount will be stretched out over many years, so the actual tax burden for a typical house will be about $10 a month," McVeigh wrote in an email to The Campus. "The town, however, is required to 'bond for' or otherwise guarantee that the entire amount will be paid in order for the project to proceed. It's a hard concept to explain, because people see the $17 million figure and get scared."

McVeigh described becoming interested in the library expansion project after learning about a previous effort to expand the library by another group from 2014-2017. As part of their outreach, the Library Building Committee at the time held tours of the library building. McVeigh took a tour and became interested in potential renovations and the public discourse on the topic.

"Since I moved to Middlebury in 1998, there have been quite a large number of public works projects," McVeigh told The Campus. "We have new town offices, we have new recreation facilities, we have a new police station, we've repaired and renovated our fire station, we have a new bridge, and we've done nothing for the library."

The current project team has made an effort to work closely with the Middlebury Selectboard, keeping them fully informed on planning progress and making sure the project has the board's approval.

The team has also worked to include local residents' ideas and preferences for the new library.

"We have tried at every step of the way to engage the public," McVeigh said. "To keep them fully informed and part of the decision making process."

There were several options for updating the library, McVeigh explained. One potential plan was to tear down the current library and build an entirely new library in a different location. Another plan aimed to update the current library. The project team found that residents felt strongly about keeping the library downtown in its original 1924 location.

The project team held public meetings to engage with town residents about the renovation. After getting the go-ahead from the Selectboard, the project team solicited designs from three architects and design firms to create designs for the potential library renovations. These plans were reviewed by library trustees, staff and a group of architects, before being discussed at a public meeting at the Town Hall Theater with around 200 attendees. If the town votes in favor of the renovation, the plans will be completed by Wiemann Lamphere Architects and the ReArch company.

COURTESY PHOTO/WIEMANN LAMPHERE ARCHITECT, REARCH COMPANY
Town residents will vote on a $4.5 million municipal bond to fund the expansions and renovations in a special election on May 7.

The team gathered further input on the project at numerous other town hall meetings held at the library and local retirement homes, as well as focus groups with teenagers and children and conversations with the Middlebury Elementary School Association.

"One young person thought the new library should have a secret passage," McVeigh said. Another suggested the new library have a tower.

He also noted that the project team believes that with the funding structure, the citizens of Middlebury will get a true bargain. "Essentially they're getting offered a 17 million dollar building for which they'll have to pay 4.5," he explained.

McVeigh said it is important to communicate to residents that they will not be shouldering the nearly $17 million cost alone.

"It's difficult because the language of the vote starts with the total number," McVeigh said. "A lot of what we're trying to do is educate the public that yes, the library is going to cost this, but you're not going to have to pay that."

Some of the cost of the project will be covered through federal energy rebates because the new library will use geothermal energy, according to Dana Hart, the library director. The library also hopes to win grant money from the Vermont Department of Libraries and other state and federal grants. While these grants are competitive, Hart expressed confidence that the desired $2 million from grants can be achieved.

The project team also aims to raise $6 million through donations, and has already raised $3.5 million in pledged donations to the project.

Library users mostly include students from the Addison County School District, local daycares, young parents and families, and older community members who come to the library to use magazine subscriptions, among other resources.

Children of many faculty and staff at the college frequent the library, according to McVeigh. He added that the library employs several students from the college through its work-study program, and provides an alternative study space for any college students who want a change of scenery.

Beyond books, the library carries a large collection of puzzles, has free wifi, many newspaper subscriptions and ukuleles that can be rented. This is in addition to, of course, many books.

The renovated library will also include various new community spaces.

"We will get a new conference room and a new library activities room, which will mostly be used by children, as well as a new space for middle school and high school students and a new roof garden," said Hart.

Beyond just adding new spaces, the renovated library intends to use its existing spaces more effectively.

"There are other benefits that don't necessarily have to do with the amount of space, but how space is configured," said Hart. "Entrances will be much more accessible and welcoming, the elevator will be much more accessible. The library will be safer and have better sight lines. Spaces will be laid out in ways that are more flexible."

During the anticipated 56 weeks of construction, The National Bank of Middlebury has offered to host the library in its building.

The vote on the library's expansion will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on May 7 at 77 Main Street, located in the town offices next to the library. All local residents, as well as any college students registered to vote in Middlebury, are able to participate in the election.

"The library is for everyone, and we get everyone," said Hart. "It's one of the most diverse areas in Middlebury."

WOMEN'S TRACK WINS THIRD STRAIGHT NESCAC CHAMPIONSHIP

By JACK McGUIRE
Sports Editor

The women's track and field team won their third straight NESCAC Championship this past weekend at Tufts University. The men's team meanwhile finished fifth place in their respective NESCAC Championship, and overall, the men's and women's teams combined for six individual victories.

"So many [people] on the team stepped up and performed even better than they were expected to perform," said sprinter Anna Krouse '25.5. "It was really exciting to be a part of that."

The women's championship victory was led by impressive performances from a number of athletes. The Panthers notably dominated in the throwing events. Jaxon Palmer '25 won the hammer throw and placed second place in the javelin competition. Palmer's hammer throw title was her second win in the NESCAC after she triumphed in the javelin in the 2022 season. Fellow thrower Julia Tulimieri '26 won the shot put title with a 12.26 meter throw, coming up just 0.09 meters short of a school record. Finally, in the discus competition, Madeline Saunders '25 took second place with a 41.54 meter throw.

The women's team continued to enjoy success on the track. Audrey MacLean '27 shined during the weekend, cementing her place as one of Middlebury's top performing athletes. MacLean won both the 3,000 meter steeplechase and the 5,000 meter race, making her one of just three Panthers ever to win multiple NESCAC Championships in a single season and the first rookie to accomplish this feat. MacLean runs for the women's cross country team in the fall, where she won NESCAC Rookie of the Year this past season.

"Not only is Audrey a fantastic runner, but she's also an amazing teammate," Krouse said "She has a really positive attitude about racing and running."

Apart from MacLean, the team had many other admirable performances on the track. Elle Thompson '25 came in third place in the 800-meter race, and Ciara Dale '24 came in third place in the 400-meter hurdles. Ultimately, the Panthers clinched the team championship after the team of Thompson, Lily Bulczynski '26, Caroline VanSchaik '27 and Tatum Peskin '24 came home in second place in the 4x800 meter relay.

On the men's side, six Panthers won all NESCAC honors. Dave Filias '25 won the hammer throw for the second consecutive year. His throw of 61.22 meters was a school record, crushing the competition as the runner-up finished over eight meters behind. Ziggy Goddard '25 also claimed an individual title in the 3,000 meter steeplechase, and Alec Gironda '24, Xander Swann '25, Dan Urchuk '25 and Caleb Smith '27 each earned All-NESCAC Honors after each placing third in their respective competitions.

Looking forward, both the men's and women's teams will send select athletes to the Division III New England Championships at Mt. Holyoke College this weekend.

"Everyone who qualified this weekend is gonna go out and just have another chance to race, and the weather's looking good and people are pretty excited," Krouse said.

Beyond the regional championship, both teams will hope to send runners to the national meet later in May to conclude a successful spring season.

COURTESY PHOTO / ANNA KROUSE
Head Track & Field Coach Coach Martin Beatty '84 hoists the women's track and field championship trophy.

GREEN INITIATIVE CELEBRATES EARTH DAY AND GROWING SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS IN MIDDLEBURY ATHLETICS

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

As a month-long celebration of Earth Day, Middlebury Athletics took on the "Green Initiative," a sustainability challenge spearheaded by the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). The program harnesses the competitive spirit of Middlebury's student-athletes, who have battled this month to see who can pick up the most trash on campus, or which team can get the "perfect sort" of collected waste. More notably, each team has brought their own unique angle to sustainability.

Middlebury is home to an undoubtedly enthusiastic athletic culture and a tradition of success in nearly every sport. At the same time, the college has a storied environmental studies program, proudly maintains "carbon neutrality," and takes the lead in student-led initiatives aimed at improving institutional environmental practices that often lead to structural change. In recent years, the synergy between these traditions have begun to take hold.

Middlebury Athletics' sustainability endeavors officially began in 2015 with the "Green Panther" program — despite the slowed efforts during COVID-19 to promote dialogue about sustainability and expand sustainable practices across the department, the SAAC Sustainability Committee is now renewing these efforts with full force. Since fall 2021, each varsity team has had a "Green Liaison," whose role is to ensure the proper sorting of trash and recycling and assume responsibility for a compost bucket during travel and away games. This year, the liaison's key task is to lead their team to success in the annual Green Initiative: a team-specific, student-led sustainability effort.

Caroline Adams '26 heads the SAAC Sustainability Subcommittee alongside co-president Shea Brams '26. Adams spoke about the challenges the committee has faced and her excitement about the future of sustainability in athletics. The impact of these initiatives varies sport by sport, according to Adams.

"For now, the impact can be small. What is important at this stage is that each team's approach starts a conversation about how to be more sustainable, and once it becomes a habit I think we will start to see a large change," Adams said.

The program is young — but even the impact of the football team's nearly 100 players, working in groups of 10 to clean up the waste leftover from tailgates, has yielded a significant impact this year.

Since SAAC's revival of the sustainability subcommittee, examples of these small yet consequential efforts have become increasingly visible, including several creative solutions to minimize waste. For example, if you see a lacrosse player refining their mastery of "wall ball" with a tennis ball, chances are that this ball used to belong to the Middlebury tennis team. This season at Ralph Myhre Golf Course, you might notice recycling bins at every hole or players replacing plastic tees with wooden ones. While celebrating the women's lacrosse team's undefeated regular season, perhaps you recognized the swap from disposable to reusable silverware at the team tailgate.

In the evening, one might spot the women's volleyball team, who have outlawed driving to practice, hoping to reduce emissions and enjoy valuable team bonding by walking to and from the athletic center. The tennis teams are hoping to donate worn-out balls and racquet strings to a community organization, but in the meantime, have found a new use for what they might have once been considered trash.

Looking forward, Adams and Brahms hope to grow student-athletes' engagement with these issues and efforts.

"We are hoping to bring in guest speakers to discuss sports, sustainability, and climate justice to start these conversations and make sustainability a more central part of athletics at Midd," Adams said. "I think getting everyone together for these valuable conversations, something like, for example, the Aaron Taylor discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion, will be really impactful."

Post-doctoral fellow Markus Gerke has worked closely with the SAAC Sustainability Subcommittee to discuss how sports intersect with issues of environmental justice, and how effective climate-related work has operated in sports organizations outside of the Middlebury community.

"I believe that initiatives for environmental justice and sustainability need not be associated with more negative terms such as 'reducing' or 'limiting' -- as if 'greener sport' would automatically mean 'less sport'. Instead, I think it can be incredibly exciting and empowering to envision what changes could make our sporting practices more sustainable and how we can use the power of sport to also contribute to environmental justice," Gerke wrote in an email to The Campus.

There remains much room to improve upon in Middlebury Athletics' approach to sustainability. The urgency of the climate crisis demands involvement from the entire community and it is clear that student-athletes are starting to do their part. Demonstrating this new momentum, the Green Initiative board hangs proudly in Peterson Athletic Complex, gleaming with Middlebury sports' efforts to improve their environmental impact.

For updates on the ongoing sustainability efforts across Middlebury athletics, check out @middsaac on Instagram.

Editor's note: Lexi Linafelter is a member of the women's volleyball team and a sports editor for The Campus.

COURTESY PHOTO / LEXI LINAFELTER
The women's volleyball team is part of the green initiative.

OUTRAGED AT MIDDLEBURY'S COMPLICITY IN GENOCIDE:

Community, movement, education at the Gaza Solidarity Encampment

By JUNE SU & KANA DeCOSTE
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A bubble of frustration and grief among the student body burst when the Middlebury Gaza Solidarity Encampment began on Sunday, April 28. The momentum grew as many students felt that the ongoing genocide in Gaza — with 35,000 dead, 8,000 missing, and 7,000 injured has been swept under the rug on the Middlebury campus, waiting for disruption to stir the status quo.

The student group gathered on the Quad features a diverse array of cultural backgrounds protesting for the groups demands. Despite recent coverage by Fox News which suggests otherwise, Jewish voices are integral to and embraced in the collective gathered at the encampment. At the Monday "Zionist Co-opting of Judaism" workshop, a diverse range of Jewish student voices were at the center of the conversation.

"This is a really human space; there is no knowledge barrier to engage," one Jewish student said. "We're not trying to exclude people. I've felt so alone on this campus since October 7th. In three days, this encampment has eliminated that feeling."

At around 7:30 p.m. on Monday, students at the encampment observing Passover celebrated the final night through singing and sharing matza, charoset, and macaroons. At 8 p.m., there was the daily Maghrib Prayer.

Before Sunday, we were carefully considering the risks of joining the encampment due to the militant police crackdowns on college campuses across the country. Seventy-nine students have been arrested at the University of Texas, Austin and the administration has begun to threaten expulsion at Columbia following several suspensions.

However, our fear proved temporary as we witnessed the sheer organizational power of the Middlebury student body outraged with American complicity in Israeli crimes against humanity. This community has continually filled daily roles to aid one another and poured passion and knowledge into the educational efforts. We realized that this encampment and its community were worth more — and had taught me more — than the day of classes we had missed.

Since tents have been set up, a plethora of students, faculty, staff and community members focused on the genocide have streamed into the encampment, offering their support by bringing food, blankets, and charging devices.

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Large signs created by protestors communicate messaging to the Middlebury community.

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Tents set out on McCullough Lawn for the Middlebury Gaza Solidarity Encampment.

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Classes and groups can meet in the People's University tent at the encampment.

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A diverse range of cultural foods were contributed to the encampment by the Middlebury community.

On day two, a group of us were tasked to create banners for a "People's University," canopy in the encampment designated for hosting class and club meetings. Throughout the rest of the day, both a class and the SGA Environmental Sustainability group leaders' meeting were held there. Even more exciting than that is knowing several more classes and departments will be holding meetings here in the coming days.

On the third day of the encampment, over 90 people huddled under the central tent to listen to a "Palestine and The Environment Workshop" led by a staff member and a faculty member. They shared student writing, poetry, and a message from a staff member who could not be present out of fear of retaliation. The people leading the workshop discussed greenwashing and ecocide and how it pertains to the genocide in Gaza, where the destruction of food and water infrastructure has been a strategy utilized by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

This workshop exemplified the type of intersectional learning of that under the current college administration, cannot be implemented in a formal curriculum due to the administration's both-sides-ism on the genocide. Especially at Middlebury, a leading institution for environmental studies with a major specifically devoted to Environmental Justice, uncensored, relevant education is imperative.

"There is no climate justice without Palestinian justice," attendees chanted repeatedly at the end of the workshop.

One student remarked on the unique strength of this encampment through its communal learning opportunities.

"That's one of the most important drawing points, because there are a lot of educational opportunities here which help the people who feel like they can't join because they think they don't know enough about the conflict to be able to participate or take a stand," the student said.

Each time we looked around the camp and saw the expanding perimeter and new faces, whether campers or attendees of daily events, we were filled with a new sense of empowerment. We began with 35 tents on Sunday. By Wednesday, there were over 80 filled tents. It was an exhibit of real, tangible, community-based political action on this campus. Windsor Smith '24.5 remarked on the political culture of the Middlebury encampment.

"I've never really been one to experience school spirit, but I have never had such pride in our community as I have right now," Smith said. "Having the tent camp expand every day just illustrates no matter what people's personal reasons are for being here, they're willing to be bodies on the ground for an indescribably important cause."

Despite the sense of community cultivated within the area, Smith also noted that many students who pass by the political action avoid eye contact.

"Even from people very close to me, who I know have good hearts, I hear an overwhelming narrative about not having time to engage in something like this. But the reality is, we are already out of time. We, as a global community. All almost 35,000 people who are dead are out of time. And I'm willing to sacrifice [an] essay or two to have my voice heard on that subject."

The sacrifices students have made to organize the encampment drive the movement on our campus to remove this institution's complicity in genocide, but are still meager compared to the livelihoods and lives lost in Gaza. A liberal arts education would mean nothing if it is not applied to resist ethnic cleansing happening in real-time.